

# AMERICA

A CATHOLIC REVIEW OF THE WEEK

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DECEMBER 21, 1940

## WHO'S WHO

THE EDITORS wish good will and peace to all the readers of AMERICA, and join with all of them in offering glory to God in the highest. May the blessings of the Christ Child be upon us all on this sacred anniversary of His Birth.

J. GERARD MEARS, our Managing Editor, has designed and lettered the Christmas cover. . . . JOHN LAFARGE uses the Christmas theme to reveal something of what Saint Paul describes as "the unsearchable riches of Christ." . . . DANIEL M. O'CONNELL discourses lightly on the crib that was in Bethlehem. . . . JOHN A. TOOMEY is rather startling in his reflections on what the modern mind has done to the truth about Christ. . . . HAROLD C. GARDINER wonders whether things are what they seem to be in Bedlam, or whether Bedlam makes them seem to be what they are. . . . THE POETS are a goodly array, hailing from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and even from England. Many others there were who were inspired by the Christmas theme, but only a few could be chosen. . . . MOST REV. PAUL YU-PIN, Vicar-Apostolic of Nanking, China, is well known to American Catholics, for he has toured this country seeking aid for the missions for his native land. There is joy this Christmas for the Fra Angelico of China. . . . THOMAS F. DOYLE was a reporter on the *Irish Times*, Dublin, until 1926, and since his coming to the United States has contributed to many periodicals.

NEXT WEEK will be published an article by Sigrid Undset. It has special timeliness at the turn from the last sad year to the dark year to come.

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# COMMENT

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ANGELS emerged from the deep-blue heights above the town of Bethlehem on the night of the Saviour's birth. Quietly they flowed down to the earth, caroling glory to God and peace, good-will to men. On the Christmas night of this year, angels must be hovering over England and Germany, quietly chanting their eternal prayer of glory to God, sadly longing for peace and good-will between men. But visibly out of the skies come no messengers sent by God. Only men sent by the rulers of war, only planes bearing bombs, dart thunderously through the Christmas night. In hope, the Holy Father pleaded for a truce from hate and war on this sacred night of memory:

It is fair to hope and trust that, at least, on that Holy Night and on that Holy Day, all belligerents will declare a truce, either spontaneously or by mutual accord, so that the clash of arms shall not silence the angelic chorus of peace which is repeated in the sacred temples, and so that new fratricidal bloodshed shall not disturb or miserably extinguish the heavenly joy of that hour.

His plea will be in vain, we fear. As on other nights, planes of evil will be abroad over the towns and cities of Europe, and men hardened by war will strike from the sky, and there will be death and ruin for those for whom the Christ Child was born. There will be no truce, even on Christmas night. There may be slaughter as gruesome as that of Herod when he swept down on Bethlehem. That the Infant Saviour may have mercy upon His people, that He grant compelling Grace so that the makers of war may be turned to peace, should be the prayers in the heart of every one who adores at the crib in spirit with Mary and Joseph and the Shepherds and the Angels.

THE Hoover Plan to send relief to the oppressed nations of Europe has been officially rejected by Great Britain. For the present, then, there can be no practicable results from further debate. But the plan and the ideal of aiding those peoples of Europe who are innocent of war, who are the victims of aggression, who may be destroyed by starvation and disease during the coming months must not be laid aside. At the very earliest moment in which American charity and humanity can find a way, relief supplies must be rushed to these peoples. Meanwhile, many an American conscience will be bothered by our inability to help immediately. The negative answer of the British Government was given by the late Lord Lothian on December 10. On that same day was released a statement by a group of Catholic American laymen, stating their opposition to the Hoover Plan. The British reply, in our opinion, is a more convincing document. It bases refusal on the necessities of war. Any material assistance from the United States or other

countries would, in the British opinion, tend to prolong the conflict. Hence, Great Britain cannot permit "the strengthening of the German war potential by the importation of foodstuffs." The British reply, however, does not deny the possibility of sending "medical supplies destined for distribution in territories occupied by Germany and in unoccupied France." We find the arguments against relief, as expressed in the Catholic statement, far from conclusive. It is difficult to comprehend how "any attempt to force the British blockade and feed the conquered populations of Europe is contrary to the best interests of Christianity and America." It is, likewise, a far cry to invoke religion as a reason for not aiding our fellow-men. Their assertion that "already German youth is emptied of all belief in Christ and has learned to blaspheme God," may be more or less true. Their argument about permitting "physical suffering in order to avoid the greater evil of spiritual starvation," might be more or less questioned when applied to this instance. While they grant that "to permit physical starvation when it lies in one's power to allay this suffering to some small degree would be an evil act under ordinary circumstances," they opine that "these are not ordinary circumstances." It is unfortunate that a Catholic statement on such a problem as this did not invoke sound Catholic logic.

SPAIN, meanwhile, is in desperate need of the essential foodstuffs. Why, then, should not the Hoover Plan for relief be applied immediately to the Spanish people? None of the reasons alleged against aiding the populations of the occupied countries of Northern Europe are valid in the case of Spain. And yet there is near starvation throughout the Spanish Peninsula this winter. General Franco and the Spanish people are determined, as far as they enjoy self-determination, to keep out of the war. Great Britain is bending every effort to rescue Spain from cooperation with the Axis powers. With that in view, England has concluded a financial agreement with Spain, is negotiating a trade agreement, is shipping manganese ore, seed potatoes from Ireland, wheat from Australia as soon as shipping facilities are open, and in other ways creating the basis for friendship. Furthermore, the British Government has favored the present negotiations looking toward financial and other agreements between the United States and Spain. The Franco Government has given assurance that no food products will be sent from Spain into Germany. Here in the United States there is a huge surplus of wheat. Over in Spain, the wheat supply, because of poor crops, is not expected to last more than a few months. Famine is threatening. The United States Government, through a generous pol-



icy, can rescue the Spanish population from misery and, perhaps, Spain from the Nazis. The American Red Cross can use its facilities for its humanitarian relief in Spain. The Hoover Plan of aid to the destitute peoples of Europe can be applied to Spanish relief. The present destitution in Spain is a challenge to the American conscience. As Spain can and should be aided this very winter, so should heroic, little Finland. The population of the unoccupied area, according to late reports, is reduced almost to the starvation level. Why, then, continue debate on help to the Nazi-held nations, fruitlessly, and forget the real need of relief for other small countries?

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WHEN the devil quotes Scripture, or would play the monk, the spectacle may be ridiculous or repelling, but it does imply a compliment. He masks himself in the holy habit and under the Holy Word because he knows that they are things respected, which may deck him in respectability. So, when the Italian press seized on the Pope's recent impassioned prayer for peace and justice in the rebuilding of the "new order" to show that he was speaking their double-talk and thinking their thoughts, they stultified themselves, true, and trailed a puerile bait for our gullibility, but they did at the same time make an unwitting and complimentary admission. They admitted that there is a cogency and prestige about the Pope's utterances which demands respect. They admitted that there is so little moral force behind their own words, that they are forced to steal it by claiming to speak through the lips of one whom they hate. Yet they will use his words, because he does speak with moral force. They admit that religion is still a force in the world. They try to smuggle their message across under the prestige of a name that towers up like a great beacon to guide the religious-minded of the world.

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WE were just getting ready to hang up the Christmas tinsel when we received an invitation to join in a dismal lodge of sorrow. Gloom and sadness pervade reflections upon the state of the Catholic Church in this country uttered in the latest issue of the *American Scholar* by George N. Shuster, president of Hunter College. The skeleton is finally pulled out of the closet for the benefit of the non-Catholic reader: a grim and depressing fact that "as at present constituted, the Catholic body has virtually no use for intellectuals. Catholic writing has seldom been at so low an ebb. The educated Catholic has never been so much alone in the midst of his fellowmen." As for the Catholic press, it is a sad, sad story. The clergy have now little influence (so, at any rate, the people are not "priest-ridden"). Needless to say, the warnings of the "few intellectuals" about Hitler and his Nazism go unheeded. Poignancy is lent to this revelation by the circumstance—not expressed in just so much, but, we gather, gently implied—that Dr. Shuster is himself one of the unappreciated intellectuals.

PERSONALLY, we should like to comfort Dr. Shuster a bit in this connection. With our own eyes we have scanned headlines, week after week, not to speak of cuts in the daily press, which feature Dr. Shuster in most eminent and congratulatory fashion. On actual count we have discovered at least 263 Catholic scholars, clergy and laity of both sexes, who from one part or another of this country appear to know about as much as to what is going on in the world as does the president of Hunter College. An astonishing number of them write fluently, speak frequently, and are overwhelmed with demands for lectures and addresses. A few days ago, in the city of Chicago, a capacity audience of 3,000 persons, most of them Catholics, thronged to hear Sigrid Undset, triumphantly touring Catholic America, express her ideas about Norway, Europe, Hitler and things in general. Madame Undset is not in the least influenced by Nazi propaganda. American Catholic Bishops, priests, editors, professors, pour upon our desks exposés and refutations of every phase of Nazi errors. Catholic study clubs, upon every conceivable topic, have multiplied into the tens of thousands. Science, literature, international questions, political science, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, history and dozens of other matters are discussed by thousands of intelligent and cultivated men and women of the Catholic Church throughout the land. Life is too short, Dr. Shuster, and we all need the Christmas spirit much too badly to make it worth while to lie down and cry because there are a few noisy people who do not see *anything* in political matters as does the individual scholar, and a great majority of thoughtful people who fail to see *everything* through the individual scholar's spectacles.

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DID Saint Thomas Aquinas, who speaks his mind on so many things of vital interest to modern man, teach the natural evolution of man's body from that of a lower form of life? According to the Rev. William T. Doran, S.T.D., of Quigley Preparatory Seminary in Chicago, who writes on this topic in *Theological Studies* for December, 1940, the idea has been rather generally circulated that Saint Thomas was not averse to the idea that "the body of the first man was not created in the ordinary sense of the word, but evolved naturally from the slime of the earth, through the various stages of vegetable and animal life, until it reached that state of perfection in which it received from God the created soul, and became Adam." Dr. Doran, however, investigates carefully the Angelic Doctor's writings and finds nothing wherewith to support this contention. On the contrary, he believes that "the medieval Scholastic could hardly be expected to express more clearly" an opinion in the opposite sense. The fact that Saint Thomas does not teach even this modified idea of evolution is not necessarily an absolute condemnation of the idea. But some deadwood will be cleared from the perennial and complicated controversy if the authority of Aquinas is no longer to be invoked in behalf of an evolutionary idea.

# THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH AND CAME TO DWELL WITH US

JOHN LaFARGE

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ONCE that the herald angels have fulfilled their annual Christmas duty of recalling the remarkable doings in Bethlehem, they may look for some other way of occupying their time. I have often wondered if they employ it by attending some of the conventions of various learned societies which occur around that season.

It would be pleasanter for angels than for us who participate in these discussions. Their Yuletide joy would not be broken into by the thought of papers to be prepared. Only miracle-men actually prepare such papers ahead of time, particularly as Christmas, by some psychological freak, seems to come a few days earlier each year. Even if you have no papers to prepare, there is an oppressive thought of having to listen to many other persons' talks beside your own. Indeed, if it were not for the prospective, though fleeting, joy of hearing yourself you might lack the courage to attend at all.

The angels can easily attend, because: (1) they do not have to consider traveling expense or lunch; (2) they are free, I presume, to move around the country as they see fit; and (3) they present no seating problem.

One may object, of course, that they have nothing to learn from these affairs. But I imagine they enjoy, in a kindly sort of way, the irony of the situation. If you were one of the angels who had paid a personal visit to Abraham in his tent, or the angel who opened the door of Saint Peter's prison in Rome, you would certainly be interested in watching the painful efforts of mortals to patch up a little ancient history through scraps of manuscript or shreds of pottery. Knowing, as they do, infinitely more about history, social and physical science, politics, philosophy and psychology than any of us, they may take pleasure in helping to guide the discussion through their inspiration and unheard presence.

Source of unfailing amazement, however, even to angels, must be the difficulty and awkwardness with which mortals communicate their more advanced ideas to one another.

Angels, being pure spirits, communicate their thoughts directly one to another, without the intervention of spoken or written language. But mankind must resort to a painfully complicated proceeding. From an angelic standpoint, it must be somewhat ludicrous. First of all, we must make a series of noises in our gullets, palates, chests and nasal passages. These correspond not to whole ideas

but merely to parts of ideas. You cannot get even the beginning of the idea until you have heard an entire series of noises. Ever since the unfortunate event at the Tower of Babel there are so many ways of making these noises to represent any given set of ideas that scholars spend their whole lives compiling grammars and dictionaries to interpret them. The sound *coo*, for instance, suggests a pigeon to English-speaking persons. But it represents a dog to the Gael and to the Teuton a large female horned animal.

Writing still more complicates things. As an old German lady complained: "If the beef is t-o-u-g-h why is my old man's voice not g-r-o-u-g-h?"

There is a queer irony about man whose bodily strength is so limited, yet who accomplishes such wonders with his mind. But the grace, the rhythm, the beauty of the little that man can accomplish with his body alone vastly outshines the cumbrousness of his world-stirring mental operations.

The mind is indeed clumsy, once it ventures into any elaborate association with other minds. No mind was more lucid and clean-cut than that of Saint Thomas Aquinas. It was the mind of an intellectual as well as a moral thoroughbred. Yet his best reasonings had to be encased in rigid formularies of unvarying length, unvarying style, if they were not to be confused and dissipated.

But a much more awkward business takes place when a group of people engage in a discussion or an argument, without the strict "Spanish boots" worn by Saint Thomas. The amount of lost motion, of fumbling, crawling, the aimless blows, the huge complications of effort necessary to make the least advance toward any goal of understanding: it is about as graceful as a drunken elephant using a typewriter.

Add to this all the paraphernalia of committee reports, of analyses and statistics, of other aids to reason and memory, and even the drunken elephant is a sylph in comparison.

The mind is most *itself*, most true to its real character, when it reasons and communicates its reasoning to others. Then its inner word becomes outward. Then it creates, shakes the world around it and builds new worlds. But when most humanly rational the mind is most inhumanly ungraceful. Even the finest reasonings leave behind them a trail of weariness. The subtlest, mellowest discussions, from the point of view of rhythm, grace, attainment of immediate purpose, are clumsy and



footless as compared with the children skating in the park, or the humblest circus performer. Imagine a convention where ideas were exchanged with the precision, speed and rebound of a tennis tournament!

For this reason I am more patient than some people with the eccentric sculpture of Carl Milles. One would not like to meet in the flesh any of his fiery-faced genii or his marble Indian of Minneapolis. But these strange creations seem to depict the discontent of man's mind with the ineptness of the material organism through which it must seek expression. They look as thoughts and ideas might look, if they could be seen and apprehended directly—in all their fierceness and reality.

When you have given some attention to this contradiction you begin to understand how totally different is the procedure of the Infinite God when He chooses to express His ideas to man.

God chose to express to man the greatest idea which can possibly be conceived, for this Idea is God Himself: God's Reason, the Logos or Word. God's Thought is not something which is distinct from God's Being, as man's thoughts are distinct from ourselves. Thoughts come to us and we cease to have them; they come and go. As the philosophers tell us they are merely an accident of the soul, whose substance remains unchanged. But God's Thought does not come and go. It is one Substance—consubstantial—with Him. We express our words to ourselves inwardly, in our own minds; then we utter them outwardly in spoken or written words, if so inclined, and they pass. But God's Word is spoken to Himself from eternity.

The Word is always with God and the Word is God. The Word is an infinite Person and is spoken by the Father, an infinite Person, from all eternity. But to us He is spoken in time, in the course of earthly history, in the Incarnation and Birth of the Saviour.

As an echo of their midnight hymn, the angels might like to emphasize the following thought.

Two thousand years ago the Infinite God chose to express His Idea to mankind. He uttered in time the Eternal Word of Reason, with none of the awkwardness and delay that man experiences when expressing his passing and finite ideas. God spoke once, and He spoke so simply that no child in any age or country could fail to understand. He spoke to us through the human Body and Soul that His Son took upon Himself. This sacred Humanity was presented to us in the form of a little Child. It appeared with the utmost simplicity, directness and grace.

Hence it is that each year, at the beginning of the Christmas celebration, the Church recalls the words of Saint Paul (Titus iii, 4-5): "But when the goodness and kindness of God Our Saviour appeared . . . He saved us."

But when God's Thought was uttered to us by His taking human flesh, a great universe of incalculably precious truths was revealed along with Him. These truths are so rich and meaningful that human minds will explore them to the end of time and never reach bottom. Saint Paul tells us that he

was given the privilege "to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," and he called the sum of these truths a "mystery which had been hidden from eternity in God, Who created all things." Particularly, he informs us, it is a mystery of love, of such vast dimensions that no mind has ever been able fully to "comprehend the breadth, and length, and height, and depth." (Eph. iii.)

From all this follows a practical consideration.

The minds of many millions in this country, people we meet and talk with every day, are tightly closed against these truths. The language in which we try to convey them means very little to these people. Words have been distorted through long abuse and much miseducation. As put by one of our leading secular educators, now in the heart of an exciting controversy, the words have become "opaque"—you cannot look through them to any idea beyond. If we do not reflect on their meaning, they may grow opaque even to us.

Argument and reasoning accomplish little, save for men of good will, or as a proof to the evil-minded that at least we can give an account of ourselves. Only when the field of discussion has been carefully limited and the method frankly agreed upon, as in the open-air discussion of the Catholic Evidence Guilds, can logical reasoning impress according to its deserts.

To understand the words in which Christ's Revelation is expressed, we must bring men back to the Word on Whose Divine authority they are expressed. If they accept Christ's Divinity, if they grasp the basic truths concerning His Person and His mission in this world, they will then have little difficulty in clearing their minds of misunderstanding as to the words in which those who preach Christ are obliged to express themselves. They can come out of the fog into the clear. But they are kept from accepting Christ's authority by an insidiously sown distrust of God Himself.

The only way this distrust can be overcome is by doing our part in showing to the pagan world around us the true and real graciousness of God. There is no great difficulty in doing this. God revealed His own goodness by the loveableness of the Word in Whom He spoke to us. Christ drew men to His Father by first winning them to the love of His own Humanity. He then raised them to an understanding of the primal love which caused the Son of God to become man.

With all our churches and all our services and novenas, an enormous number of Americans know next to nothing about the Humanity of Christ, and equally nothing about His Divinity. In the *Ecclesiastical Review* for November, the Rev. William H. Russell reminds us, in an illuminating article, of how much there is to learn about the riches of Christ's human character. If each of us, as we kneel at the Christmas Crib, would try to carry over to our unbelieving or, at least, religiously illiterate neighbors, one syllable of that Word which is spoken to us there from the depths of the Blessed Trinity, we could turn the tide towards God in the hearts of non-Catholic America.

# CHANG SHAN-TSE RESTS IN PEACE

MOST REV. PAUL YU-PIN, D.D.

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NO MORE will the brush of Dr. Chang Shan-tse, the Fra Angelico of China, create the beautiful paintings which have made him famous all over the world. China and the Catholic Church have suffered an irreparable loss by the sudden death of this eminent artist-convert who brought the charm and exotic tone and rich symbolism of Oriental art into the ancient and varied heritage of Christian art. He rests on the slopes of a Szechwan mountain, in his native land.

I met him for the last time in Chungking. He and his wife and children had just attended Mass and received Holy Communion and he was in an exultant mood. One would never think that one week later this great Catholic who did so much for the Church, through the example of his life and the talent of his brush, would be dead.

As we walked through the ruined compound of the church, he told me with obvious pleasure that he had something to show me. It was the scroll containing the citation of the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, given him by Fordham University, last June.

"I am not worthy of this," he told me, with the sincere modesty which was characteristic of the man. I was glad to explain to him that Fordham had done well in honoring him in recognition of his great contribution to Christian art and culture, for his generous charity and constant efforts for the betterment of his native land. I congratulated him heartily on this tribute of esteem from the great American nation.

On his return to China after his gratifying and productive visit to the United States, Dr. Chang Shan-tse had been accorded great honor and well merited recognition for his great service to China.

In Hongkong, where he landed after two years of absence, he was besieged by reporters as a national celebrity, and an impromptu exhibition of his paintings was visited by thousands. The colleges of the city begged for personal appearances. At Ricci Hall and Hwa Yan College, both Catholic institutions of renown, he delivered masterly addresses, emphasizing the great benefits of Catholic education.

When he arrived at Chungking, China's auxiliary capital, he was greeted by the high officials of the Government and President Lin Sen received him the following day. The Generalissimo had already proposed him as a candidate for election as one of the advisors to the Chinese Government. Friends and admirers in the highest positions in the capital made his return a celebration.

His position as an outstanding convert to Catholicism was never overlooked. To all, his life was

the exemplar of a sincere seeker of beauty, truth and love. These three dominating ideals were emphasized in the press, which, aside from stressing his great achievements in art, dwelt at length on the example he had given in this triple quest. Beauty he had sought and achieved in his art. Love he gave and received in his extensive relief activities. Truth he had found in his conversion to the Catholic Church. The newspapers aptly referred to him as a Saul who had become Paul.

Now that he is gone and the memory of this saintly artist has been saluted by the press and the people and his virtues proclaimed in the sincere tributes of his friends, we feel sure that here, indeed, was a great apostle of modern China.

His art had its roots deep in the ideology of China and its topmost branches were in Heaven. The San Min Chu I, the Three Principles of the People and his frequent use of the tiger as the symbol of resistance in the liberation of China show him as a master of psychology and adaptation. This mastery of psychology, as with all great painters, enriched and enlivened his art. His justly famous *Song of Righteousness* caught by the magic of his brush the ancient traditions of China, as voiced by the poet-patriot, Wen Tien-siang.

But where his skill was still trembling before the immensity of what might be accomplished, was in the field of religious art. As he himself admitted: "I am not yet arrived at anything like perfection in my religious paintings."

The baptismal name of Angelico, which I had chosen for him, fitted him well. The spirit with which he painted his Madonnas, his Saints and Our Lord, was compounded of the same reverence, enthusiasm and tenderness as that which animated the great Tuscan in the fifteenth century. Their technique and idiom may be as far apart as Florence and China, but the same religious inspiration kindled the creative ambition of both.

One recalls the picture of the Sacred Heart which he hung at the World's Fair at New York. This unprecedented and unique conception of the Sacred Heart, King of the World, blessing all nations, represented as tigers peacefully playing together, won the enthusiastic approval of American art critics. At the same World's Fair, his famous painting of Judith was photographed beside Van Eyck's Judith (valued at a million dollars) and the two masterpieces, European and Chinese, were given wide circulation in the illustrated magazines.

Chang Shan-tse, had he lived longer, would have given tremendous impetus to a school of native Catholic art in China.

The last picture he painted in the United States was the *Christ of the Ascension*—a magnificent Christ: gentle, yet strong; glorious, and yet a man of suffering. The Divinity of the Son of Man stood out so impressively in that last painting in America, that it was apparent that his art, too, was undergoing an ascension—it was evolving toward the higher reaches of idealism.

Dr. Shan-tse died at Kolossan, in the vicinity of Chungking, at a humble war hospital. Air raid alarms were screaming at the time and the tele-



phone lines were jammed. Owing to this circumstance and the suddenness of his death, I was prevented from arriving before he passed away. When the news reached me, he was already standing before the great Judge.

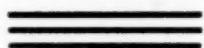
His great artist soul would no longer have to imagine the Christ he had found on the way to Damascus. He would be standing face to face before his beloved Model.

Now that he is buried, that his delicate hands lie folded for eternal prayer, may all those who have been good and kind to him, all those who have shown their appreciation of his efforts, pray that his work may not die with him; that the memory of his great charity and of his wonderful conversion may continue to inspire all those who knew him, and who will know him in the generations to come, as the "tiger man," who made China's heroism, sufferings and struggle for the cause of justice, known to the world.

Chang Shan-tse is not dead, his art lives on in those whom he has inspired and who will also find beauty and love and, we pray God, truth.

## THE STORY MARY TOLD SAINT LUKE

DANIEL M. O'CONNELL



"If only I might have seen the crib of clay in which the Saviour lay! Under pretext of honor we have substituted one of silver!" The exclamation, timeless in its thought, was thus put into words by Saint Jerome toward the end of the fourth century. Today, it sounds as a paraphrase from that book of spiritual purging, written more than a thousand years later, *The Following of Christ*. The essentials of the drama of the Crib will be with men even to the consummation of the world. The silver crib of Saint Jerome's scorn has disappeared in the local and national conceptions of European, Asiatic, African and American artists through the centuries. This patron Saint of scriptural erudition is not less vigorous in his further commentary:

Bethlehem which is now ours, the most august place in the world, of which the psalmist writes: "Truth is issued from the earth," was shaded by a wood to Adonis, and in the grotto where the Infant Christ once lay, tears were shed for the lover of Venus.

Jerome, however, was blessed in seeing the beginning of the great Basilica of the Nativity to be erected through the generous zeal of Saint Helena and of Constantine. Saint Bede the Venerable, in *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, fortunately gives us Adamnan's description of Bethlehem, and the latter's implied commentary:

The walls are built flat without any battlements. In

the east corner there is, as it were, a den, *not labored of man* but framed of nature. The uttermost part of it is said to be the place of Christ's nativity, the innermost the manger, where He lay. This den covered somewhat far inward with goodly precious marble, hath over the place where our Lord was born, a great church of the blessed Virgin Mary built upon it.

There is a domestic note in Dom Graf's description of Bethlehem. In the early afternoon of Christmas Eve, the Latin Patriarch in a stately procession makes his annual journey to Bethlehem. All of present-day Bethlehem partakes in the welcome to him. They applaud vigorously with that "rhythmic clapping of hands, inseparable from a Palestinian festivity." The bands of the two local schools, the Franciscan and Salesian, "play their loudest." Dom Graf assures us that a verse of the *Te Deum* can be caught now and then as the hymn is chanted by the clergy and seminarians from Jerusalem. Then comes the Dom's domestic note:

I hope dear St. Joseph, when he entered Bethlehem so quietly and was so coldly received, on the first Christmas Eve, had the consolation of seeing or hearing in spirit the pomp and noise with which Christmas is ushered in ever since by the good Folk of Bethlehem.

You parents, who have hesitatingly given Christmas drums to your lusty children; you, teachers of music, quiet your nerves with the above consolation. And for the soothing of any qualms on the part of designers of a Christmas crib, as they apply a generous amount of artificial snow and bank it in around the crib, let me give them the assuring word of Dom Graf that on this particular Christmas morning he is describing, "snow fell in Bethlehem."

As the Church has ever acclimated herself in non-essentials to the customs and idiosyncracies of every nation on the face of the earth, so in turn have the different peoples absorbed the riches of the Church into their own individualities. Perhaps this is most noticeable in the case of the painters. Our Saviour, our Lady, the Apostles are given the outlines and, in particular, the facial peculiarities of the artist's nation. Especially is this true, I believe, of our Lady. The Italian masters assign to her, and, of course, to her Infant, the mature sweetness of their race. Again, in Hoffman's paintings, particularly of our Saviour in His boyhood as well as in His manhood, there is the mixed and manly facial expression of the Hebraic and of the Germanic. So, in its way, with the Christmas Crib. Each nation tells the story in its own folklore.

The story of the Crib through the ages follows very closely that of Christian art. Devotion to the Manger might be said to have had its origin in the church of St. Mary Major in Rome. The patron Saint of the Crib was Francis of Assisi. He flung aside its false accretions of centuries and enthroned in the simplicity and poverty of a regal but barren Manger its genuine Ruler, the *Gran Piccolino Gesù*, the Little Lord Jesus. The Crib remained despite the frigidity of the Reformation.

Christ's Manger has appealed not only to each nation of civilization but to every phase of man's culture, according to the instruments of art which he had at hand.

In a category all its own is the unique and first narration of the Nativity by Saint Luke. From him in his simple yet perfectly adapted style we have those details which have made the Crib humanely Divine. Saint Francis of Assisi, restorer of the Christian Crib, would be the first to acknowledge the world's debt to Luke, the physician, scholar, friend of the Blessed Mary, and evangelist. His simple telling of it is a necessary overture to any contemplation of the Nativity.

Without Saint Luke's narration, would the world even have had the story of Bethlehem's sublime Crib? Useless, speculative question. Yet, in view of the little we know of Christ's hidden life, we are deeply grateful to Saint Luke's human efforts in securing the details of his Christmas Gospel and to the kind Providence that guided his footsteps and writing hand.

*The Man Who Gave Us Christmas* was the catching title of an unusual article on Saint Luke in the *Atlantic Monthly*, December a year ago. "It was he (Luke) who gave us Christmas, for it was Luke, and Luke only, who searched out and found and preserved the birth story." Winifred Kirkland, the author, quotes the agnostic Renan's tribute to Saint Luke's Gospel as the most beautiful book in the world. She considers the evangelist, Luke, "as one of the earliest research scholars of history." There is genuine Marian devotion in her explanation.

It seems most probable that in Jerusalem (Luke) would have sought out Mary, the mother of Jesus. . . . If we try, we can surmise Mary's own accents as an undertone to Luke's Christmas chronicle.

In Miss Kirkland's final paragraph dealing with the death of this evangelist, the "man who gave us Christmas," she asks what his story of "a God laid in a cattle trough for a cradle" meant to Saint Luke himself "in his darkening old age, in his darkening world?" Palestine was being liquidated by raging Roman armies. Luke's pen might have recorded the number of Israel's dead. Instead, and it is a pleasure to use Miss Kirkland's words:

Instead, Luke, an old unbroken man, sent forth from the stricken world of his day to our stricken world of today the deathless hope of an angel hymn, and the deathless promise of a newborn child.

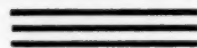
The Representative of the Christ-Child on earth, Pius XII, the Clergy, Religious, the Laity, Christians everywhere will, on Christmas day, 1940, fervently renew their deathless hope of the angel hymn and the deathless promise of the newborn Child for His peace to His world. Prayer is the only possible peace negotiation today. It must be directed to Bethlehem's Crib,

To the place where God was homeless  
And all men are at home.

The longing of Saint Jerome in the fourth century to see the actual Crib of clay in which the Saviour lay has been common to every Christian, at least, and to many a non-Christian, from the night of the first Christmas to that of the present year of grace. Little if any prophecy is necessary to say that the longing for the original Crib will continue to the consummation of the world. The Church's perpetuity is a guarantee, it would seem, of such ever-recurring emotions of love and confession.

## WHAT DO MEN SAY THAT I AM?

JOHN A. TOOMEY



IT is the first Christmas night. Shepherds are keeping the night-watches over their flock. Suddenly, a blinding light scatters the darkness, and a brilliant angel, standing before the frightened shepherds, speaks to them: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you the latest news. This day is born an Infant Who does not know his destiny. As he grows older, he will find out. He will be a figure of quite some historic importance. And this shall be a sign to you: You will find the Infant in a cave with his mother and father and all his brothers and sisters." And, then, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, filling the skies with the strains of a celestial melody: "Economic security and democracy to men of good will." And it came to pass, after the angels departed, the shepherds said to one another: "Let us go over to Bethlehem. Perhaps the child's mother may have some inkling as to what he will become." And they journeyed with haste and found the child with his parents and all his brothers and sisters in a cave. But they learned that the mother had no knowledge of his future.

The above would represent roughly the inner meaning of Christmas to those whose chief knowledge of Christ is derived from recent Broadway plays, movies, best-seller novels and secular magazine articles dealing with His earthly career. There has been an increasing stream of such productions during the last two years. Some of these give one the impression that Christ's importance in history springs from His devotion to democracy and economic security. The effect of all of them is a debunked God-Man.

*The Nazarene*, a best-selling novel by Sholem Asch, etched in the minds of millions a totally false picture of the Christ and the spiritual havoc wrought by the book itself was further heightened by a fanfare of eulogistic reviews, which caught the false view of Christ from the book and exposed it to the view of other millions who had not read the volume.

The play, *Family Portrait*, produced on Broadway and later purchased by Hollywood, unveiled to the gaze of theatre-goers an extremely large family that could scarcely be described as holy. Representing the Blessed Virgin as the mother, in the natural way, of a number of children, including Our Lord, it struck at a cardinal tenet of traditional Christianity, the Virgin Birth, and the figure of Christ emerging from the dialog was that of a Palestinian Abe Lincoln, quite decidedly not the figure of God.

Another Broadway play, *Journey to Jerusalem*, by Maxwell Anderson, concerned itself with the pilgrimage of Jesus to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. Referring to this production, one dra-



matic critic relates how it reveals "the slow, almost grudging discovery of the Child and His family that He is to be the Messiah." A revolutionary robber, Ishmael, discloses to the boy Jesus that His mission is to be one of bitterest tragedy.

Included in the cast of characters in the movie, *Strange Cargo*, was a mysterious figure quite obviously intended to represent Christ. This mysterious personage taught a Pollyanish, naturalistic religion which was most emphatically not the religion of Christ. Moved by widespread protest, the screen moguls at length changed the mysterious one into a non-mysterious parson, but by that time the film, with its false Christ, had been shown in movie houses throughout the land.

A fiction story in the December issue of a nationally circulated magazine may be taken as representative of the misleading articles printed in pre-Christmas issues by so many of our periodicals. The story opens with "the Carpenter" leaving Nazareth and informing a questioner: "I am going into the wilderness . . . I will seek the One who is the prophet and the teacher. I think I will find Him in the wilderness and I will know Him when I find Him." Encountering a dying robber in the desert, He repeats: "I seek One who is mightier than all. . . . I believe I would know Him if I saw Him." The robber then lets Our Lord in on a great secret, exclaiming: "You are the One yourself. Why do you seek yourself? See! There is a light about your head." Enlightened by this and other experiences, including one with John the Baptist, Our Lord at length learns that He Himself is the One.

The everlasting God, without beginning or end, finding out that He is God from a robber. God Almighty suffering with amnesia. God's Mother just an ordinary, good woman, on the order of Nancy Hanks. God with brothers and sisters. God an atheistic, platitudinous do-gooder. Such is the spiritual hokum the stage and the screen, the books and the magazines are giving the American people.

Two principal methods for the destruction of Christianity in human hearts appear in the pages of history. One is the way of bloody persecution and the direct denial of Christ Himself and everything He represents. The other is the indirect mode, the way of dilution. It dilutes the concepts of Christianity until they are too weak to inspire anyone. It does not deny that Christ is God, but merely endows Him with qualities incompatible with the Godhead, such as lapses of memory concerning His own identity. It does not openly scoff at the sublime status designed by God for the Virgin Mary. It simply clutters up the stage with a lot of brothers and sisters, and lets the audience draw its own conclusions. It sketches a caricature of Christianity, and the caricature becomes Christianity for millions of well-dressed spiritual hill-billies. The authors and playwrights mentioned above did not intend to attack Christianity. They were all reverent and sincere in their treatment of the sacred theme, but they were wildly wrong. They handed out spiritual poison. It affords little solace to a victim to learn the druggist who poisoned him was merely ignorant and not malicious.

Saddest feature of the phenomenon is that millions of our spiritually underprivileged are commencing to grope for the truth. The fact that the theatre and the authors are devoting increasing attention to Christ indicates a growing interest in Him. Bombs are falling. The only civilization we know is shaking crazily. Multitudes are beginning to yearn for spiritual security in a world gone mad. And they are being given not the One Who alone can strengthen and succor them. They are being given an *ersatz* Christ.

To these throngs of spiritual Okies, made into religious wanderers by the erosion of their faith, the inner meaning of Christmas would be as the promised land, if it could be flashed before their minds. In these days of organized attempts to feed starving bodies in Europe, it would seem appropriate to intensify efforts to feed starving souls in America.

Last year, a group of miners were entombed by a cave-in. For days and nights, they clung to the hope of rescue, but as time passed without any indication of approaching help they began to despair. And then into their darkest hours came the faint sound of rapping. Rescuers were signaling a message of hope. With renewed strength the buried miners clung tenaciously to life until their rescuers penetrated to their living tomb.

The present seems an appropriate moment for us Catholics to intensify our efforts to succor the spiritually underprivileged, buried beneath the dark doubts of their godless school days, cut off from the realm of truth and light by the avalanches of error issuing from the plays and the books and the magazines. It is the time for us to signal to them the true story of Christ, the all-conquering hope and joy that Christmas really means. To rap, rap, rap the great tidings to these entombed souls. Rap, Rap. Do not despair. The Christ of Sholem Asch is not the real Christ. The mother in *Family Portrait* is not the Blessed Mother at all, not even remotely. The boy Jesus in *Journey to Jerusalem* is not the boy Jesus, and the figure in *Strange Cargo* is a far cry from the Prince of Peace. The sketches of Our Lord in the magazines are caricatures.

Rap, rap, rap. The angel speaking to the shepherds said: "This day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." And the heavenly multitude did not sing about economic security and democracy, although, of course, they favored both. They sang of much greater things: "Glory to God in the highest: and on earth peace to men of good will." The shepherds did not find the cave full of brothers and sisters. Only Jesus, Mary and Joseph were there. And Mary was a Virgin before and after the Nativity. And the Little Infant, gazing fondly on her from His manger, knew Who He was. He was, He is God Almighty, come to earth to save your soul. He brings you eternal hope. If you will but follow Him, He will drive away your dark despair, and fill your heart with joy and love. He will save you, though bombs fall and civilizations totter and crash. This is the real meaning of Christmas. The Little Infant is God Almighty. Do not despair.

# IF WE PUT OURSELVES IN THE NEGRO'S PLACE . . . .

THOMAS F. DOYLE

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WHEN so many millions of white Americans are living under substandard conditions, why should we concern ourselves particularly with the Negroes? This is a question that comes often from persons unacquainted with or indifferent toward interracial work. Sometimes it is asked by Catholics, who, making an ill choice of phrase, assert that, after all, charity begins at home. As to the use of the word charity, this much can be said: those engaged in the interracial movement are certainly not without charitable motivation, but their efforts are aimed at justice rather than charity.

If interracial injustice were not an actuality in America, the needs of the Negro minority would not call for any specialized attention, and Pope Pius XII would not have had to single them out for specific mention in his letter to the Church in America shortly after his accession. The blunt truth is that so much discrimination exists toward the Negro, both as a group and as an individual, that he has become a standard argument against the integrity of the nation's democracy. The fact that he needs special attention is not his fault, but the fault of every American whose thinking is tainted with the racial heresies of totalitarianism.

As proof that racial antipathy is not an evil confined to the humbler elements in our population, we have the recent remarkable utterance of the Governor of one of our Southern States. This is what this Governor, speaking to a group of Negroes, said: "This is a white man's country. America was settled by English, Scotch and Irish settlers who came here and shed their blood for it. White men cut down the trees, plowed up the fields and developed America. Of course Negroes worked some, but they came to the scene later, after New England was settled. You fellows ought to feel proud that you are in a great country like America. It is the best place for you and your people."

James A. Farley, speaking at the Negro Progress Exposition at Detroit last May, was more accurate and generous in his appraisal of the work of the Negro people in the development of America. "Against their will," he said, "and without knowledge of the place they were to occupy in America, their ancestors were forcibly brought to what was practically a barren wilderness. It was their job to clear the land for the future cities, the factories, the homes and the farms of America." Howard W. Odum, in his work, *Southern Regions of the United States*, says that the Negro is a part,

both creator and creature, of Southern culture. Historians are agreed that the great cotton industry of the South could never have been developed without the work of the Negro. The skilled labor of the pre-Civil War South was mostly Negro. They were the carpenters, the masons, the harness-makers, the farriers, so indispensable to the building and maintenance of the great plantations.

America has been good to the Negro, but not good enough nor just enough, as anyone even slightly familiar with race conditions knows. If the Irish or the Scotch or the Germans had been treated as has the Negro, would they say that America was the "best place" for them? Recently a young Negro lawyer wrote to the *New York Post*: "My life, like that of many other young Negroes in America, has been one of struggle against oppression and discrimination, yet I feel that I have a great deal to be thankful for in America." This is a generous, loyal affirmation that does credit to a race for whom the least has been done, but which, apparently, is prepared to acknowledge kindness rather than remember past grievances. It helps us to understand the amazingly loyal response of the Negro in every war in which the United States has been involved.

It is this loyal and thoroughly American race that the Christian people of America have relegated to the outer rim of their social, political and economic life. For all his devotion, his earnestness and cooperativeness, the Negro has been given the worst houses to live in and charged the highest rents. His schools are the poorest in the country. The Wage and Hour Law has merely meant that the white man can now afford to take many of the jobs the Negro has been filling. Most of the trade unions try to exclude him from their ranks. When he is able somehow to win entrance to the professions, he is denied the opportunities and privileges normally accorded to his white colleague.

Out of the despair of the colored man came the bizarre suggestion that large numbers of American Negroes be resettled in Africa, an admission indeed that America, because of racial prejudice, has never found adequate place for millions of her humblest citizens. Three million signatures were said to have been affixed to petitions urging adoption of the bill introduced by Senator Bilbo, of Mississippi, to provide means to effect this rehabilitation. The scheme savors of the impractical dream of the late Marcus Garvey, and is not likely to be



taken any more seriously, except among the more desperate of the Negro poor. Its importance lies in its implied indictment of America's failure to give full effect to the doctrines of the Constitution.

Admittedly, the Negro has benefited in many ways from the legislative ministrations of the New Deal, but the magnitude of his needs suggests a much more specific and generous concentration on his interests. It is certain that the multiple handicaps that surround him make it impossible to work out his salvation alone. Under a general program for raising the economic standards of the American worker, the Negro will, of course, derive his share of benefit, inadequate as it may be. We shall continue to allot funds for Negro hospitals, schools and housing, and in this way fulfil some of our pledges. But far more vital than a politically-inspired philanthropy is a long-range program in which government and industry will cooperate with civic and religious leaders to increase the Negro's share of the national income. "The material wants and the purchasing power of this vast (Negro) population," says Elvy E. Callaway, a Southern writer, "have been low in the past. If we will increase their standards of life, their material needs and purchasing power will likewise be increased, to the tremendous advantage of both races."

The major stumbling block to the realization of any program of this nature is the racial discrimination that persists in spite of our boasted belief in democracy and in the American way of life. God does not differentiate between the man with dark skin and the man whose skin is white, but some hundred per cent Americans think they know better. They know better than the anthropologists, the scientists, to whom Negro inferiority is an exploded myth. They know too much to be convinced that the Negro has a high degree of adaptability, that he has a high cultural potentiality, that his virtues are no whit less than the virtues of the white man. "Whatever may be said truly or falsely about other elements of the population, the Negro," writes the Rev. James M. Gillis, editor of the *Catholic World*, "has committed no crime against our civilization. Asking no favors and none of the special protection granted—belatedly—to the Indian, the Negro has asked only justice and right and equal opportunity. These things have been denied him. Against enormous odds he has tried to lift himself out of the debasement of slavery and has aimed to achieve in a generation what the white race did not achieve in centuries."

The recognition of the Negro as an American, entitled to a full participation in the opportunities and privileges that America affords, is fundamental in the interracial movement. Knowing that a reconstruction of American life must proceed from the bottom up, inevitably the first efforts of interracialists must be to bring clearly and convincingly to the attention of the nation's leaders the plight of the colored poor, who, by and large, have not only suffered grievously from economic depressions, but have had the least chance to emerge from the depths of penury and want. There are so many

faces that turn from them, so many eyes that refuse to look upon their misery, that we cannot, as Christians or Americans, ignore their pleas. We give the Negro priority because so many of his number are needlessly the poorest among the poor. And having looked upon his material distress, we are no less bound to recognize the hunger that is not of the body, but of the soul.

The Catholic Church has a very definite obligation toward the Negro, not merely through its social influence, but in its more important apostolic role. It would be a splendid and encouraging thing if the great mass of American Catholics could be organized in a crusade to abolish racial ostracism. Unfortunately, we have to recognize the uncomfortable truth that racial prejudice is as frequent and deep-seated among Catholics as among non-Catholics. Encyclical condemnations of racism have apparently not reached enough ears, or perhaps the words of the Popes have not been fortified sufficiently by the precept and example of Catholic leaders. There is a challenge to Catholic missionary zeal in the fact that out of 13,000,000 Negroes scarcely more than 250,000 are Catholics.

If we put ourselves in the Negro's place, we can see clearly enough why conversions among his race are so few. These Catholics, thinks the Negro, want me to join their Church. But they exploit me just as thoroughly as the members of other creeds. They prefer to have me worship in separate churches; they exclude me from their colleges; they want me to send my children to separate schools, to live in separate neighborhoods. Clearly, they regard me as an inferior being; their treatment of me indicates that they do not take seriously the religion they want me to adopt. If I join the Catholic Church, I am just as likely to be snubbed in church on Sundays as thoroughly as I am outside the church on weekdays.

There is much truth in all this; and we cannot blame the Negro as he tends, as most of us do at times, to generalize from the particular. The Negro is deeply religious. It is therefore a sublime tragedy that he should be discouraged by the conduct of unthinking Catholics from entering the true fold. It means that he is being denied the solace and strength that flows from union with the Mystical Body of Christ. All the beauty and wealth of inspiration that flow from the Catholic liturgy are withheld from him; he hungers in vain for the Living Bread from Heaven.

Here is the real heart and soul of the interracial question as a Catholic must view it. Through the interracial movement a definite start has been made toward eliminating apathy and prejudice from the minds of Catholics. Progress may be slow and difficult, but progress can be made. The Church Militant in America faces a profoundly imperative task, and no practising Catholic, whose eyes are open to realities, can refuse, whenever the opportunity comes his way, to lend to this task his support and cooperation. We have neglected the body of the Negro, which is bad enough, but if we fail to rescue his soul, who shall gauge the depths of our folly and sin?

# CHRONICLE

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CONGRESS. The Senate confirmed President Roosevelt's nomination of Abner H. Ferguson as Federal Housing Administrator. . . . For the third time, the Senate held up confirmation of J. Warren Madden as a member of the Court of Claims. . . . Senator Holt accused the newspapers of playing down Cardinal O'Connell's statement against participation in the war, and asserted large headlines and generous space would have been accorded the statement had the Cardinal advocated this country's entrance into the conflict. . . . Senator Thomas of Utah proposed that the United States cancel Great Britain's \$5,000,000,000 war debt in exchange for temporary control over some of Britain's Western Hemisphere possessions, declared such an exchange would free Britain from restrictions of the Johnson Act. United States control over the British possessions would end two years after the war's termination under the Thomas proposal. . . . The Senate and House approved a bill, creating the post of Under-Secretary of War at a salary of \$10,000 a year. . . . Before the Tolan Committee of the House, which is investigating the problems of destitute migrants, a witness testified he could not procure work as an electrician on a defense project because he was unable to pay an initiation fee of \$300 to the union.

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THE ADMINISTRATION. The State Department announced the conclusion of a formal agreement with Ottawa arranging for reciprocal treatment in the operation of air services between the United States and Canada. . . . President Roosevelt issued an executive order defining non-combatant military service for conscientious objectors as any service which does not call for the actual bearing of arms or for training in the use of arms. . . . The White House announced that as of December 30, 1940, exports of iron ore, pig iron, ferro alloys, certain iron and steel manufactures and semi-manufactures will require licenses, adding that such licenses would be granted to the British Empire and the Western Hemisphere and that licenses for other destinations would be held down to usual or pre-war exports. This extension of the licensing system will add further curbs to Japanese purchases. . . . The National Defense Advisory Commission reported that defense contracts negotiated by the War and Navy Departments between November 15, and November 30, totaled \$186,000,000. Of this sum, \$113,822,280 was for six cruisers. . . . After issuing short-term, taxable Treasury notes to raise \$500,000,000 in new cash for defense, Secretary Morgenthau stated he would ask Congress for permission to withhold tax-exemptions on Federal bonds. . . . Replying to the plea of King George II of Greece for "moral and material assistance," President Roosevelt declared that "it is the settled

policy of the United States Government to extend aid to those Governments and peoples who defend themselves against aggression. I assure Your Majesty that steps are being taken to extend such aid to Greece, which is defending itself so valiantly." . . . Cruising in the Caribbean, President Roosevelt inspected sites for United States bases in Jamaica, Antigua and St. Lucia.

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WASHINGTON. Secretary Morgenthau and Federal Loan Administrator Jesse H. Jones announced loans to Argentina consisting of \$60,000,000 from the Export-Import Bank and \$50,000,000 from the Currency Stabilization Fund. . . . Mr. Jones also revealed a \$7,500,000 loan to Uruguay. Credits of \$20,000,000 and \$4,000,000 previously granted to Argentina and Uruguay respectively were included in the new loans. . . . The Justice Department and the Dies Committee reached an accord. . . . In a message to the Economic Club of New York, President Roosevelt declared that political and economic freedom can best be secured by "Government and private enterprise working together for these common objectives. In this joint effort there must be provided proper reward for labor, proper incentive for enterprise and a proper return on investment." . . . Agriculture Department economists estimated that the projected defense program will cost \$35,000,000,000 in the next five years. The estimates were based on the assumption the United States would not be directly involved in the war. . . . Secretary of the Navy Knox requested of Congress authorization for \$300,000,000 to be used in improving anti-aircraft defenses on warships. . . . The National Defense Advisory Commission announced that the Navy is receiving a new warship from the shipyards at the rate of one every twelve days. . . . Rear Admiral Ray Spear, in a report for the Navy, intimated that the Walsh-Healey Act, the minimum wage regulations, the limitations on industrial profits and the excess-profit taxes were hampering defense procurement. . . . Sir Frederick Phillips, Under-Secretary of the British Treasury, journeyed to the United States, conferred with Secretary Morgenthau concerning his country's financial position. . . . The Marquess of Lothian, British Ambassador to Washington, disclosed that his Government would refuse permission for the passage of food through the blockade to civilians in German-occupied countries. Medical supplies, he stated, would be allowed to pass.

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AT HOME. In an address to the American Farm Bureau Federation meeting in Baltimore, read for him by an aide, the Marquess of Lothian declared the United States has a decisive interest in defeat-



ing the attack on Britain. "With your help," he asserted, "in airplanes, munitions, in ships and on the sea, and in the field of finance now being discussed between your Treasury and ours, we are sure of victory. . . . The issue now depends largely on what you decide to do. . . . And before the judgment seat of God each must answer for his own actions." . . . On December 12, five hours after the address was delivered, Philip Henry Kerr, eleventh Marquess of Lothian, died, after an illness of three days. . . . London and Washington concluded an agreement for bringing to this country and establishing here a 250,000,000-pound reserve of British-owned Australian wool. The United States will pay for transport, handling, storage, insurance, including war risk. . . . The Government urged the Supreme Court to rule that States may not pass alien registration laws, but must leave this field to the Federal Government. . . . Private Alfred J. Quinlan, New York National Guardsman, was acquitted by a court-martial of the charge that he had given away State ammunition. He had previously been acquitted by a Federal jury of a charge of conspiring against the United States Government in the "Christian Front" trial. . . . The Duke and Duchess of Windsor visited Miami, where the Duchess underwent a dental operation. . . . Archbishop Thomas F. Hickey died, aged seventy-six. He resigned from his post as head of the Rochester, N. Y., diocese in 1928 because of illness. . . . Alan Shaw, Oklahoma City secretary of the Communist party, was convicted under the State's Criminal Syndicalism Act of 1919 which prohibits membership in organizations advocating overthrow of the Government by violence. His wife revealed that Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt contributed \$25 to a civil-liberties committee supporting the causes of ten Oklahomans similarly charged. . . . A mild type of influenza swept through California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Arizona and New Mexico. . . . On his eighty-first birthday, Cardinal O'Connell urged Hoover's plan for sending food to Europe's subjugated peoples.

GERMANY. Speaking on a national hook-up from a munitions plant in a northern suburb of Berlin, Chancellor Adolf Hitler declared the war "is a struggle between two worlds. . . . 85,000,000 Germans have a living space of hardly 600,000 square kilometers upon which they must make a living, and 46,000,000 English have 40,000,000 square kilometers. . . . English, Americans, French are the haves, and whoever hasn't must remain satisfied with not having. . . . Again, I enter the fight as the representative of the have-nots. . . . We can never be reconciled with this world. They are fighting, for instance, for the upholding of the gold standard. I understand this. They have the gold. Our gold was robbed and squeezed out of us. . . . Two worlds are in conflict, two philosophies of life. Our capacity for work is our gold, our capital, and with it I can beat any other power in the world. . . . What we are constructing is a world of cooperative labor. We want a State in which birth matters

nothing, achievement everything. . . . One of these two worlds must break asunder. The traffic signals are now placed as follows: Gold versus labor. . . ."

WAR. The retreat of the Italian forces in Albania continued, as the Greek army captured Porto Edda, Argyrokastron and took over more than one-fourth of the country. . . . Shake-ups in the Italian High Command followed the Albanian debacle. Marshal Pietro Badoglio, conqueror of Ethiopia, resigned as Chief of the General Italian Staff, was succeeded by General Count Ugo Cavellero. Admiral Arturo Riccardo replaced Domenico Cavagnari as Navy chief. General Ettore Bastico became Governor of the Dodecanese Islands as General Cesare Maria de' Vecchi retired. . . . British-Anzac mechanized forces unleashed a fierce attack on Marshal Rodolfo Graziani's columns, captured Sidi Barrani, advanced point of Italian invasion of Egypt, together with great numbers of prisoners. . . . British flyers pounded German and Italian targets while Nazi air-raiders struck hard at London and other English cities. . . . Two German spies were hanged in London. . . . Neutral sources estimated the average weekly loss in British shipping at 84,000 tons during the last twelve weeks. . . . In the South Atlantic a German auxiliary cruiser clashed with the *Carnarvon Castle*, British auxiliary cruiser. After a big-gun duel, the German ship disappeared, the *Carnarvon Castle* put into Montevideo for repairs and care of wounded.

INTERNATIONAL. The Vatican organ, the *Osservatore Romano*, stated that in German-occupied Poland churches have been closed, hundreds of ecclesiastics placed in concentration camps or exiled, with the result that millions of Catholics are finding it difficult to practise their religion. . . . An inquiry forwarded to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, asking: "Is it legal, upon the mandate of the State, directly to kill persons, innocent of any crime deserving death, but who because of psychic or physical defects are adjudged a burden to the nation?" was given the following answer: "No, because it is contrary to natural and positive Divine law." . . . Domei, Government-sponsored Japanese news agency, broadcast that Washington's extension of the licensing system to a number of steel products "is interpreted here as a new economic measure expressly aimed at Japan." . . . Rumania agreed to deliver 3,000,000 tons of oil to Germany in 1941, twice as much as was exported to the Reich in 1940. . . . Brazil protested to London against the halting of Brazilian ships by British men-of-war in Western Hemisphere waters. . . . Ernest Wetter was elected President of Switzerland. . . . Canada placed a ban on importation of a number of articles from the United States to conserve dollar exchange. . . . Dr. Daniel Mageean, Bishop of Down and Connor, asserted the Ulster Government has been tyrannizing Catholics for years. The new Prime Minister of Ulster, J. M. Andrews, supported continued Irish partition.

## WAR TIME STRIKES

IN the first weeks of December, a number of strikes occurred in factories, operating under contract with the Government. Like clouds, no bigger than a man's hand, they may be significant of storms to come. Should this country undertake to supply Great Britain with all necessary military supplies, as a national defense measure, will these strikes continue?

The pledge made by the Labor Advisory Commission, consisting of members chosen by the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and the four railway brotherhoods, does not answer this question. In fact, since it forbids strikes only until all Federal conciliation facilities have been exhausted, it seems to reserve the right to strike, even when the workers are engaged on Government contracts. Last year President Roosevelt asserted that Federal civil-service employes have no right to strike against the Government. But it is one thing to strike against the Government in time of peace, and quite another when the country is actively preparing for war.

It would be unfortunate, for many reasons, were either the Government or organized labor to make an issue of this right to strike. The Government should use the powers at its disposal to remove all cause of dissension between workers and employers, and for this the facilities which have been granted by Congress are assuredly ample. Employers who take advantage of Federal contracts to prey upon the worker, should be made to understand the peril to their profits in long hours, low pay, and other denials of the employe's rights. The average employe is not a trouble-maker, and if he can rely upon the Government to protect him, he will not strike.

As for organized labor, it will do well to ponder on the fact that if it strikes against the Government, it is bound to lose. Congress is now considering legislation to outlaw strikes in industries engaged in production for national defense. Irritated by the jurisdictional-dispute strike, staged by two A. F. of L. unions, engaged on the construction of the new War Department Building in Washington, some influential Congressmen are disposed to take a very strong line. It has even been proposed to proceed against strikers in munition factories as individuals guilty of treason. As Representative Sumners, of Texas, one of the ablest constitutional lawyers in Congress, said in the House on December 9, if the country can take thousands of men from their jobs and send them to military camps, it will hardly tolerate strikes which "can paralyze the operation of plants upon which the safety of the nation may depend."

Let organized labor promptly protest any attempt at profiteering by the manufacturers engaged in Government work. That is its duty. But it will act foolishly if it irritates either Congress or the country by trying to guarantee its rights through jurisdictional or other strikes. Labor regimented under the rules of war would mean the collapse of the union, perhaps for all time.

## EDITOR

## CHRISTMAS WISHES

TO all our readers, we wish the gracious blessing of the Babe of Bethlehem. It is the prayer of the Editor and his Associates that their hearts may be filled with that heavenly peace of which the Angelic choirs sang on that first Christmas Night, and that it may remain with them all the days of their lives. Since God has given us His only Son to be our Brother and our Saviour, He will refuse nothing to those who petition Him in the Name of Jesus. Confiding in the Divine promise, and begging Mary and Joseph to present our prayers, we wish all a happy and a holy Christmas.

## COME, LET

CHRISTIANITY and tyranny can hold nothing in common. In the teaching of the Catholic Church, man, made to the image and likeness of God, is clothed with a dignity which God Himself respects. He is vested with rights which the state may not destroy, for these rights are not held as concessions from the state, but as the gift of God, the common Creator of man and the state. It is the duty of the secular power, therefore, to respect these rights, to protect them against evil-doers and to facilitate their exercise.

On his part, the individual is bound to obey every ordinance of the state which is founded upon justice, and is reasonably designed to promote the common welfare by assuring peace and good order. But the state in turn, is bound to remain within the limits set it by the nature of society and by Divine precept. Laws bind the citizen, as Leo XIII teaches, only when "they are in accordance with right reason, and hence with the eternal law of God." In support of this common Christian teaching, the Pontiff quotes the famous paragraph from the *Summa* of Saint Thomas Aquinas. "Human law is law only by virtue of its accordance with right reason; and thus it is manifest that it flows from the eternal law. And insofar as it deviates from right reason, it is called an unjust law, and in such case, it is no law at all, but, rather, a species of violence." Disobedience to such law is obedience to God.

The dictators in Germany and Russia have made the world bitterly aware of the violence



## QUEEN OF PEACE

SINCE the outbreak of the war in Europe, many of our Bishops have ordered the addition of the Prayer for Peace to the prayers said during the Holy Sacrifice. The spirit of our Prelates is beautifully expressed by the Cardinal, the Archbishop of Boston, in a letter to his people. "Let us all unite in beseeching the Queen of Peace to intercede with her Divine Son, that He may send peace to this distracted world, and His wise counsel and prudent direction to the leaders of our beloved country, that we may continue in that peace which is one of Heaven's choicest gifts."

## ET ADORE HIM

that can be sanctioned in the name of the state. But it is to be noticed that they have found the exercise of this violence possible only because they have succeeded, for the time, in suppressing the power of the Catholic Church. They have not worked without a definite plan. They realize, far better than many of us, who still enjoy peace and some degree of freedom in this country, that the great enemy to their schemes is the worship of God by the people, and fidelity to His law. They realize, as we do not, that human liberty is dependent upon the devotion of the people to the doctrines promulgated by Jesus Christ. When God is set aside, and His law is held to be of no great moment, liberty begins to perish. As DeMaistre wrote more than a century ago, "Wherever another religion than ours has been practised, slavery has been the rule, and wherever that religion has grown weak, the nation has become correspondingly less capable of maintaining public liberty. Government alone cannot govern. It must have Divine help if it will avoid that slavery which diminishes the number of free agents in the state."

As Catholics and as Americans, it is our duty to beseech Almighty God that His help be given this country. Our Christmas gift to our country should be a fervent prayer at the crib of Our Infant Saviour that our public officials and all the people fall down to adore Him in Whom alone are infinite justice, the rod that heals, the power that saves, and love without bounds. *Venite adoremus.*

## FREEDOM IN FRANCE

ACCORDING to a dispatch published in the metropolitan journals, the Vichy Government has issued a decree which may, possibly, prepare for the gradual restoration of Christian schools in France. The substance of this decree, promulgated on December 6 by the Minister of Education, is that henceforth one hour be set aside every week by the elementary schools for the training of the pupils in their principal duties to their neighbor, their country, and Almighty God. A similar arrangement will be made at a later time for the secondary schools, but the higher institutions of learning, it would appear, are not affected by the ruling.

To those who are familiar with the Church's protracted struggle in France to guarantee the right of the child to a Christian education, this formal acknowledgment of the Name of God by the Government must appear revolutionary. In the years succeeding the French Revolution religion was held in scant respect in France. Open profession of the Christian religion operated almost automatically to bar young men from public life, and from a career in the schools and universities. That an official should be a Catholic, or take any part in a Catholic service, appeared so utterly ridiculous, that the Abbé Fournier, who spread the report that after the victory at Marengo, Napoleon had been present at a *Te Deum* in Milan, was imprisoned as a lunatic, and remained in custody until the news was confirmed by messengers from Italy.

France, the Eldest Daughter of the Church, has often been controlled by the outspoken enemies of God and of the Church. When, under the Third Empire, a limited freedom in education was achieved, Catholic schools of elementary and secondary grade were established throughout France, but this brief period of peace was but the calm before the storm. With the establishment of the Republic, a dark period for Catholic education began, and for nearly three-quarters of a century, Catholic elementary and secondary schools have been subjected to restrictions which practically destroy freedom in education. There has never been a time when France has lacked schools of this grade, so conducted that they can fairly be described as Catholic, but Government disfavor and, at times, actual persecution have so checked their normal growth that, few as they were, they were maintained only with great difficulty.

A brighter day dawned when, after the World War, the infamous laws directed against the teaching Orders were largely abrogated, either by repeal or by non-enforcement. Between 1920 and 1936, many elementary and secondary schools for boys and girls were founded, only to be closed in great part, by the outbreak of the present war. The recent decree makes no change in the status of schools maintained under Catholic guidance, but it will, undoubtedly, strengthen their position, since it indicates the Government's realization of the truth that religion is an essential part of all education worthy of the name.

As we remarked, the decree does no more than suggest the possibility of the establishment by the Government of schools which Catholic children may safely attend. In itself, it stops short of affirmation of the Church's doctrine in education. According to an official interpretation, "duties to our neighbor, to country, and to God," are to be taught, not on "a dogmatic basis," but, rather, on the affirmation that God exists, that the soul is immortal, and that man is bound by the moral law. Obviously, this affirmation can be understood in a Catholic sense, but M. Jacques Chevalier, associated with the Ministry of Education, sees in the decree an approval of a school system for France modeled on the public-school system in the United States. If this interpretation is adopted and enforced by the Ministry, it is clear that the decree flows from a philosophy which Catholics cannot approve.

That M. Chevalier speaks with authority, may be doubted. In all probability, the task of deciding how to teach the child the duties to our neighbor and our country, which flow from our duties to God, will be left to the local officials, and that Catholics who wish to teach Catholic children the Catholic view of life here and hereafter, will not be disturbed by the Government. If this view of the decree is correct, we may hope that in time the Government will realize the value of a complete system of Catholic education, and will give this system the support which is merited by its services to France.

## POLITICAL DOLLARS

IT seems that the two political parties spent about \$20,000,000 in the last election. In consequence, hotel accommodations in Washington are at a premium, for the various hostels are crammed to the roof with political managers who have traveled to the Capital to "explain." Some will be examined by the Gillette Committee, and others by a special grand jury.

We do not expect that any political leader will go to jail as a result of his use of money. But Senator Hatch may soon discover that the meshes of his famous Act are much too large, Senator Gillette, who has announced that his Committee will resume hearings in New Jersey, and, possibly, visit Michigan, will probably hear stories of past wickedness that will make his flesh creep. Whether or not he can unearth evidence in support of these stories, will depend upon the power of his Committee to oblige unwilling witnesses to talk, and to protect other witnesses who have good reason to fear the vengeance of the local boss.

For most of us Americans, the problem we must solve during a campaign is not who is the better of two candidates, but who is the less objectionable. This problem will continue to vex us until some genius hits upon a better way of choosing candidates than the convention or the direct primary. We commend this quest to our research students in history, philosophy and political science. The discoverer will be worthy to rank with Washington and Lincoln.

## THE SALVATION OF GOD

WHEN John led his followers to the Jordan and baptized them, the rite he employed was not new to the Jews, for it had long been in use at the reception of proselytes. "I will take you from among the Gentiles," Ezechiel had written, "... and I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from your filthiness." (xxxvi, 24, 25.) This washing, or "baptism," was originally understood as an outward sign by which the proselyte affirmed his desire to abandon idolatry and his sinful life, and by penance to prepare his soul for God's pardon.

In course of time, however, it had become little more than an empty ceremony. The rite admitted the proselyte into the synagogue, but its spiritual element had almost completely disappeared. It was this spiritual significance which the Baptist stressed by preaching "the baptism of penance for the remission of sins." He well understood that the Messiah was to found a spiritual kingdom into which they alone could enter who had been spiritually regenerated.

The baptism of John was not, indeed, sacramental in its character; that is, it did not actually remit sin, as does the Sacrament instituted by Christ. When disciples came to John, he preached to them the reality of sin, and the necessity of manifesting their renunciation of sin, and their sorrow for sin, by works of penance. Thus the baptism of John was a solemn penitential rite which prepared the soul for the pardon of sin. In the words of the Baptist, his mission, in which he wished his disciples to take part, was to prepare for the coming Messiah a road over which He could enter into their hearts. Fill the valleys, he proclaimed, bring low the mountains and the hills, straighten the roads that are crooked, and make the rough ways plain; and then "all flesh shall see the salvation of God," in Christ the Saviour.

Within a few days, the Christian world will celebrate the birthday of the Saviour of mankind. He comes to bring heavenly joy to every human soul, yet to us to whom has been given the Faith, the greatest of all God's gifts, the birthday of the Christ Child will lack its deepest meaning, unless we can behold, as we draw near the manger, "the salvation of God." But eyes that have been blinded by the tawdry lure of sin cannot see His salvation. Since the beginning of Advent, the Church has been imploring us to confess our iniquities and to do penance, and she has been praying that at last we will turn from our evil ways, and in the Divine Child find our salvation. She is our mother, and it is her ardent desire that we at last behold in Christ, born of Mary at Bethlehem, the Eternal Lover of our souls.

May the preaching of the great forerunner of Christ move our sinful hearts, and the hearts of poor sinners everywhere, to thoughts of true repentance. We need not fear to come to Him at Bethlehem, for there Our Lord and Master is only a little Child lovingly cradled in the arms of a sweet Virgin Mother.



# CORRESPONDENCE

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## SALUTAI

EDITOR: Neither is our Italian-American strain with its Catholic traditions dying out. Proof? Sixteen Marescas, one of whom gave his life for the nation.

Striding through the streets of Jersey City at the head of the annual Holy Name parade are the twelve Maresca brothers, with top hats and morning clothes. They are the sons of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Maresca, who lost another son in the Argonne in World War I, and who also have three daughters. Six of the boys are of draft age. Left to right: Anthony, Joseph, Neil, Alfred, James, Frank, Charles, Michael, Salvatore, John, Thomas and Peter. They are members of the Holy Name Society of St. Paul of the Cross parish, Jersey City.

Planned motherhood does not have a patriotic ring to it in times of national preparedness. It will have a very selfish echo, too, when its perpetrators are asked by an all-knowing Judge why soldiers of heaven, a possible Paul, Xavier, Vincent de Paul, were denied existence to our distraught world. *Slackers* is an opprobrious term in patriotic and spiritual parlance.

I wonder if birth-controllers would not envy the patriotic and spiritual pride of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Maresca as they reviewed that Holy Name parade headed by the dozen Maresca sons in top hats and morning clothes, with swinging canes in hand, and with a mortgage on Heaven in their souls! I am sure of the pride of the seventeen Marescas of Jersey City and of the eighteenth of the Celestial City.

New York, N. Y. D. M. O'CONNELL, S.J.

## SHIELD OF PROTECTION

EDITOR: H. C. McGinnis, in his *Must the Constitution Protect Those Who Would Destroy It?* (AMERICA, December 14), seems to announce the dangerous doctrine that democracy can only be saved by becoming totalitarian. The true answer to his question is that our Constitution does protect those who would destroy it if that destruction is sought by exercise of the elective franchise. If by the exercise of this franchise Communists can obtain sufficient power to amend the Constitution, they have the right to do so.

If the perpetration of election frauds and crimes by the Communists is claimed as a justification for barring their party from election tickets, then both the Republican and Democratic parties would have long since been barred.

If "the scurrilous methods and abusive manner in which Communists, either openly or under cover, carry on their political activities" is a justification for barring their party from the ballot, then the Republicans should have been barred in the Al Smith campaign of 1928 and the Democrats in the Roosevelt-Willkie campaign of 1940.

Mr. McGinnis seriously argues that because the writ of *habeas corpus* may be suspended, it follows that the right of free speech and free press may be suspended. The Constitution, which Mr. McGinnis is willing to violate in order to show his love for it, expressly provides for the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* "when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it," and on the other hand expressly forbids "abridging the freedom of speech or of the press."

Alien Communists who seek the destruction of our form of Government may be expelled from this country, but American citizens can not lawfully be deprived of their right to vote to establish any kind of government they may wish even though they may advocate a change by force so long as they do not attempt to use force.

Mr. McGinnis says that the "outlawing of Communism by State or Federal action depends, of course, upon the majority will of the people." If that be true, then the Constitution which he would save is a cheat and a fraud and every minority can be likewise outlawed. His suggestion that we should "deny the protection of our laws to people who place the dictates of outside destructive forces above the peace and dignity of the American people" sounds like an A.P.A. or Ku Klux Klan attack on the Americanism of Catholics.

Every effort either by a legislature or an administrative official which undertakes to prevent an American citizen from expressing his political beliefs at the polls is an abandonment of our American principles and an adoption of the principles of Hitler, Stalin *et al.* . . .

Savannah, Ga.

THOMAS F. WALSH

EDITOR: Apparently Mr. McGinnis, who holds that freedom of speech and press can be suspended in emergency, has never studied the opinion in *Ex parte Milligan*. I quote a sentence or two: "The Constitution . . . covers with the shield of its protection all classes of men, at all times and under all circumstances. No doctrine involving more pernicious consequences was ever invented by the wit of man than that any of its provisions can be suspended during any of the great exigencies of government. Such a doctrine leads directly to anarchy or despotism."

New York, N. Y.

D.

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(The views expressed under "Correspondence" are the views of the writers. Though the Editor publishes them, he may or may not agree with them; just as the readers may or may not agree with the Editor. The Editor believes that letters should be limited to 300 words. He likes short, pithy letters, and merely tolerates lengthy epistles.)

# LITERATURE AND ARTS

## LUKE ii, 7

A red haze shimmered over Rome,  
Capharnaum was bright,  
When Peter beached his empty boat;  
He caught no fish that night.

And down in unknown Magdala,  
A vain, capricious lass,  
Combed her fire-lit hair and smiled  
Before her looking-glass.

Young James and John were wide awake  
And Zebedee was wroth;  
But little Judas lay and dreamed  
In darkened Kerioth.

It was an ordinary night,  
An undistinguished morn;  
So silently, so secretly,  
Was Mary's Baby born.

WILLIAM A. DONAGHY

## CHRISTMAS SONG

Chant now of charity  
and give praise  
for Light sobered by Love,  
coming cloaked and clouded  
because the fierce resplendent rays  
of dazzling stark Divinity  
shine at too sheer a speed  
for our gaze.  
That we be not giddied by God  
we had need  
of Light, shadow-shrouded.  
Christ for this charity  
we give praise.

VIOLET CLIFTON

## WONDERS

Wan the wintry leaf swings,  
Skies droop melancholy—  
Yet mistletoe empearled springs,  
Brave blazes holly.

Bright with a new star  
Is night; the beasts kneel:  
The Kings ride from afar  
Girt in gold and steel.

Here the world's comfort is!  
Here the world's wonder!  
A Virgin gives her Babe a kiss—  
And treads the Snake under.

Though Herod in Jerusalem  
Heed not Rachel's weeping—  
Blest has been Bethlehem  
With a Child sleeping.

And on our sad hearts sere with care  
Glad breaks the morn.  
"Hosannah!" peals the frosty air,  
"A Son is born!"

THEODORE MAYNARD

## LESSON FOR CHRISTMAS

Save for sacred ditties  
Sung by men in gowns,  
Quiet are the cities  
And quiet are the towns.

No bird sings to his lover  
Songs in minor tune—  
For all is under cover  
And clouds are on the moon.

Quiet are the meadows  
Where the Christ is born,  
And quiet are the shadows  
Of the early morn.

Not a word is spoken  
As the moment comes,  
Not a star broken  
Into silver crumbs.

Keep the midnight quiet,  
Look at Him in wonder—  
For He will come in riot  
When all the earth will thunder.

ARTHUR MACGILLIVRAY

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

(for several voices)

*First Voice:*

String the streamer, hang the bell  
And the wreath of evergreen.  
The radio will sing, "Noel"  
(Whatever that may mean).  
We really had not time to shop,  
Such crowds . . my feet . . I thought I'd drop,  
But anyway  
I always say  
It's not the gift that counts  
It is the spirit of the thing. . . .

*A Distant Voice—like an echo:*

Hark, the herald angels sing:  
"It is the spirit of the thing  
And not the gift that counts."

*A Quiet Voice:*

Let us celebrate Christmas:  
This is the birthday of the Son of God,  
God of God,  
Light of Light,  
True God of true God,  
Who, in great humility, gave His life and,  
On a felon's gibbet, gave even His death for men.

*Another Voice:*

Ten more, nine more, eight more shopping days,  
Seven more, six more, five more shopping days.  
Send the card and check the list.  
Prepare the Christmas cheer  
For the annual family tryst  
That comes but once a year.  
The gifts are gay with sticker and string.  
With joy, with joy the Yule bells ring—  
It gives the heart a lift!

*The Distant Voice:*

Hark, the herald angels sing:



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"With joy, with joy the Yule bells ring,  
Prepare, prepare the Yuletide cheer,  
For Christmas comes but once a year—  
Wrap it as a gift."

*A Desperate Voice:*

Four more, three more, two more buying days,  
These last few days always are the trying days,  
How to get and what to get and what did we forget  
to get  
And how can one get anything for people who have  
everything?

*The Distant Voice:*

Hark, the herald angels sing,  
"For people who have everything  
How can one get anything?"

*The Quiet Voice:*

This is the birthday of the Son of God  
Who in His life had not whereon to lay His head,  
Whose cradle was a manger in a stall for beasts,  
Whose deathbed was a cross on the Hill of the Skull—  
The Son of God,  
Born in someone else's stable,  
Buried in a borrowed tomb.

JAMES L. DUFF

## THIS CHRISTMAS

This is the outpost of the past,  
The hinterland of time.  
Who ever thought that this far out  
The Christmas bells would chime?

All history curves behind us,  
But O our hearts are young:  
Tomorrow cannot silence  
The song today has sung!

SISTER MARY IGNATIUS

## THE OX

Over deep drifts of snow  
Joseph and Mary go,  
Mary upon the ass  
Riding so lowly;  
Crowded is Bethlehem,  
There is no room for them,  
No word of greeting for  
Mary so holy.

Not in a house at all  
But in a cattle stall  
Joseph and Mary seek  
Lodging till morning;  
Dumbly the ox gives heed  
To the poor travellers' need—  
Great is the mother's joy  
Long before dawning.

Never so strange a host  
Giving his uttermost—  
Manger and mound of hay,  
All that he's able;  
Low hangs his heavy head  
Close to the trestle bed,  
Breathing to keep the Child  
Warm in his stable.

SARA MAYNARD

## REDEUNT SATURNIA REGNA

The elder gods are sad tonight throughout the ancient  
lands,  
And the silent sands of Egypt lap them with yellow  
hands;  
*But the little God of all the world crows wrapped in  
swaddling bands.*  
The obscene groves are withered where the blood of  
man has dried,  
There is no cool of fount or well, the last oak's nymph  
has cried;  
*But a little palm-tree quickens on a Bethlehem hill-side.*  
The Sphinx is old and weary, and its claws too stiff  
to scratch,  
And Memnon's granite feet are broke, and rust eats  
out the latch;  
*But the little God of Christmas kicks His toes up in the  
cratch.*  
The incense-pots burn stale and low before the sacred  
fire,  
And Krishna's holy carts are fouled, their hubs stand  
deep in mire;  
*But the warm ox-breath smokes sweet and blue within  
the frosty byre.*  
And Thor goes roaring to the sky upon his funeral  
pyre;  
Zeus frowns upon his mountain-peak; storm-dark's his  
iron sire;  
*But joy is smiling in the crib, and all the world's desire.*

CHARLES A. BRADY

## CAUSE OF OUR JOY

O Mother of fair love, it was not alone  
Christ whom you mothered on the first Christmas night,  
Not alone the Orient, the Splendor that outshone  
Daylight and suns and all created light.  
It was not only this new dearness, kissed and held  
In love and lullabies among the straw,  
Warmed by the breath of oxen that still smelled  
Of clover and sweet fields. But in deep awe  
There crept in with the shepherd and his sheep  
And bowed down with the oriental king  
Your other children. Always we will keep  
The joy of your mysterious mothering,  
Cause of our joy, Heaven's gate, at once our mother,  
On that first Christmas night through Christ, our  
Brother.

SISTER MARIS STELLA

## CHRISTMAS

Stable-housed, manger-bedded, O beast-warmed He lay,  
Nor wept at cold, heart-cold and body-cold.  
Lost lambs have strayed, will stray outside love's fold  
Not knowing, needing to be taught the way.  
Shepherd, Key-bearer, breathing first earth-day,  
Worlds around, beyond world, clasped in hold  
Too small to cling to finger, yet big to mold  
Soul-life, God-breath imprisoned in flesh of clay.

Heart-bedded be, soul-housed, love-warmed tonight,  
(Godhead more known, in Host more deeply hidden,  
Than woman-born Infant in first God-chosen Birth;)  
Called down by voice of priest, by mere man bidden  
To leave Light for candle-light, for dim soul-light—  
Adonai, Emmanuel, God-man reborn on earth!

ANNA BEATRICE MURPHY

# SANITY AT BEDLAM

HAROLD C. GARDINER

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THINGS are prone to be upside down at Christmas time. All is gloriously turned around and mixed up. How different and strange the clean midnight air smelt in our young nose as we turned the day around and went, trudging so tinglingly wide-awake between mother and father, to Mass at night. And in the bright, like-no-other morning of the Day, when we all lined up in the upper hall to march downstairs and see what Santa had brought, the youngest of all led the family procession—not mother or father, but the toddler headed the family trek downstairs to the tree.

And all through the day, things are quite literally upside down, as mothers can wryly attest. Can anyone recall ever having been spanked on Christmas Day? No rules, no discipline that day—and that was an upside down state of affairs in itself. Of course, the whole mixing up had begun way back with talk of Santa Claus. You did not realize, of course, that that jolly, munificent gentleman was no one else but father. Father felt, though, that there was a most lamentable mixup, (a confusion worse confounded) for Santa was sure to satisfy your every extravagant desire, and father—well, not that he was unwilling, but how to stretch his few dollars to the magic measure of Santa's generosity?

Yes, Christmas is gloriously upside down. Even the very word that names Christ's birthplace, that lovely word Bethlehem, got into the mixup. Our English ancestors, in their love for shortening names, (that queer process that gives us "Maudlen" for Magdalene) used to call it "Bedlam." So an old carol tells us, in delicious disregard for chronology, that Saint Stephen, the first martyr,

... a clerk  
In Kyng Herowdes halle,  
saw a sterr was fayr and bryght  
over Bedlem stonde.

which announced the fact that

ther is a chylde in Bedlem born  
is better than we alle.

Then in the course of time, there was a priory established in London, which gradually became a hospital devoted to caring for the insane. It was called St. Mary's of Bethlehem, and as Bethlehem had been commonly called Bedlam, so was the asylum for the insane, and so gradually were all such places, so that now our word "bedlam" means confusion and disorder, and says nothing to us of the little Judean town which saw the birth of the Christ Child centuries ago.

So, the quality of upside-downness has long been connected with Christmas. But it is too bad, is it not, that we have gone so far? How sad that we can so take the fine sheen off holy things, like gold coins that have been rubbed smooth through over-much passing across the counters of the world.

How lamentable that the musical and sacred word Bethlehem can be debased so, step by step, until it comes in changeling form, to be Bedlam, a madhouse, a place of confusion.

For Bethlehem was no Bedlam, we protest. There was no trace of Babylon there, no confusion. Rather, there was peace, order in tranquility, when "all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course" and God's "almighty Word leapt down from His royal throne." Midnight, the shepherd-watched fields, sheep, whose gentle bleating but deepened the hush that brooded under the silent Palestinian stars, the quiet ox and ass; not a word to suggest turmoil, disorder. How sad, then, ever to have called this peaceful little town Bedlam!

So we think. The upside-downness of Christmas is as delicious as gingercakes to a young Christmas appetite, but it should only be on the surface of the day; it should not touch the real meaning of Christmas, for that is too sacred, that was too ordered and peaceful.

Sacred? Yes, deeper than the deepest fathoming of fact or fancy. And peaceful beyond the reach of yearning. But ordered? There was an orderliness there on that stilly night, as there is always an order in God's doings, but it was a Divine order. And to our poor, dim, half-opened minds, the order of God's plans is often a topsy-turvydom. Where is the order that our prudence would recognize in the first being last, in losing your soul to save it, in the humble exalted and the exalted humbled?

So perhaps our old English carolers and preachers were right after all in calling Bethlehem Bedlam, with all that word has come to mean, for there, as in all God's great strategies, there was a Divine topsy-turvydom, there were things standing on their heads; God an infant, Joseph and Mary, royal travelers, finding hospice in a poor stable-cave, shepherds conversing with angels, beasts (according to legends that are not too incredible) kneeling in worship, wise men wooing wisdom from a village trinity, a proud king troubled over a just-born Baby.

Yes, there was confusion there, too—confusion not in the events themselves, for

He came alle so still  
To His mother's bower,  
As dew in Aprille  
That falleth on the flower,

and the stars (save one that went errant with joy), kept their courses, and the earth sang not in its quiet spinning—but confusion, confounding for the world's arrogance, its fulness of itself then and forever put to shame by God's outpouring of Himself.

It is due to this Divine upside-downness, to this sweet confusion of the first Noël, that fairy tales have in them a profound and keen truth. One Divine story, that would have been but a lovely unrealizable dream had it not been Divine, came true in Bethlehem; things were there in the still of that long gone midnight, not what they seemed, and other things may not be either. Now it is not too impossible that the fairy queen may lurk in the



ragged of the scullery-maid, since then the Eternal Word hid in the stained tatters of human flesh.

That great childlike man, Chesterton, who never strayed beyond the lovely light that pulses from Bethlehem's cave, once wrote of the *Ethics of Elfland*. He saw in all the world's fairy tales glimpses ever recurring to the world's eye of a lost Eden and happiness once had and waiting to be regained—a constant preoccupation with the Fall of Man. But may we not go further, and see in fantasy and make-believe man's dim remembrance of Bethlehem? Only a Christian, I hold, can really appreciate Mickey Mouse or the talking animals of our fables, for in these topsy-turvydoms where things become something else, he is reminded time and again that human nature became something other once and for all time—when God consecrated it by taking it to Himself through her of whom it is sung:

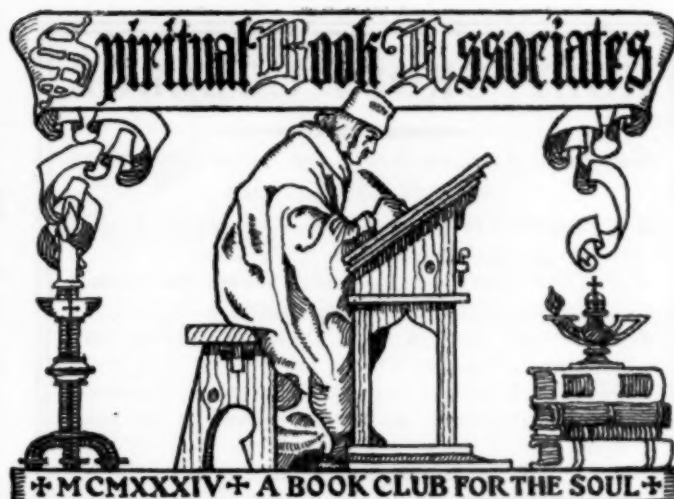
Mother and maiden  
Was never none but she;  
Well may such a lady  
God's mother be.

Should we not, then, speak rather of the Theology, than of the Ethics of Elfland?

For since Bethlehem, make-believe has become a Divine art. There was, to be sure, no make-believe, no masking there. The Infant, His eyes still closed, His first uncertain wail still echoing in the stable before pouring out to flood the world with the sweet, terrible cry of the Hound of Heaven on mankind's trail—that Infant *was* God. But that reality, which seemed so utterly incredible, has, as it were, baptized and made Christian the make-believe that springs from childlikeness.

Because the Child was so utterly other than He seemed, Saints have loved to seem utterly other than they were. Because he knew the Child and His heart so well as to give us the Crib, the Poor Man of Assisi loved to play the fool, and he was no fool, save a Bedlamite fool. Our Lady, too, was above all others a Bedlamite, filled to the brim and overflowing with that Divine and happy folly of the Crib, which stood the world's values on their head, and made valid with eternal verity our trite phrase that "things are often not what they seem."

Thank God for Bedlam, then, for the Divine topsy-turvydom that there consecrated our fantasies and our fairy-dreams. To accept the inversion of our human values that Bethlehem meant is a sure and mortal blow to our smugness, which makes us prate of order being Heaven's first law. It may be, but it will be God's order, not ours. If only Bethlehem can shock our self-centeredness deeply enough, perhaps we can be jarred out of our amnesia, in which we forget who we really are, back into a wakefulness that keeps vigil always at the Manger at Bethlehem, even if, as a medieval preacher said, to gaze on the "pore childe bonded in a cribbe," we have to take a very humble place indeed, even that of kneeling "betwix a nox and a nasse." Perhaps we may be shocked out of our real madness into the madness of a Bedlamite, mad with the Divine topsy-turvydom of the first Christmas night, which saw, with still-held breath and full heart, Omnipotence in Bonds and Man free.



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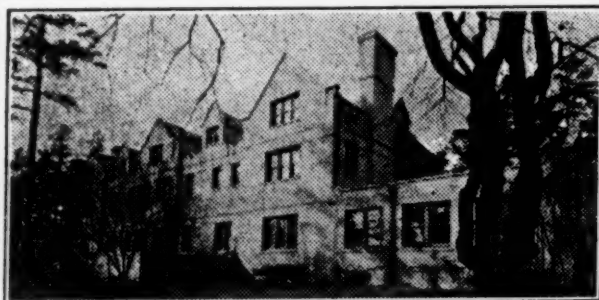
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## BOOKS

### HORRY, WHO CHRONICLED A JIGGING VANITY FAIR

HORACE WALPOLE: A BIOGRAPHY. By R. W. Ketton-Cremer. Longmans, Green and Co. \$3

FEW men have been better equipped than Horace Walpole to chronicle the manners of their times. His position in society, his large circle of acquaintances, his peculiar genius and curious temper, together with an auspicious span of years—he saw all four Georges—combined to qualify him for the task. Moreover, he looked on such a career almost as a vocation; and Mr. Ketton-Cremer, in this exceedingly able biography, points out how Walpole continued to chronicle the social and political history of his age, not only in his *Memoirs*, but also in thousands of delightful gossip private letters.

He always managed, says Mr. Ketton-Cremer, to have a judiciously chosen literary correspondent, a politically inclined correspondent, an antiquarian correspondent, and so on, that the record might be complete; and he took care to fill up any hiatus in the ranks should one of them die or become estranged. His keen bright eyes darted everywhere, missing nothing—never was there a writer less dull or more entertaining; and from between the pages of his correspondence, living figures walk out as from Sir Joshua's noble portraits and Hogarth's tumultuous canvases. "Fiddles sing all through them," wrote Thackeray of the letters, "wax-lights, fine dress, fine jokes, fine plate, fine equipages, glitter and sparkle there; never was such a brilliant, jiggling, smirking Vanity Fair as that through which he leads us."

Unspiritual Walpole certainly was, but so, alas, was the world he knew—still he was not so undiscerning as to fail to see and lament whither the portents led in France. No religious-minded, gentle Cowper was Horry, with whom one could always feel at ease; but, as Mr. Ketton-Cremer shows, neither was he the completely frivolous fop of tradition. His good breeding was above reproach, he could be a faithful friend to those he cared for, he was charitable toward the poor, he had a strong sense of family loyalty, and Macaulay to the contrary, he did not always merely play at politics and "set public men by the ears," though indeed none realized better than himself his own inadequacies in the field where the great Sir Robert had changed the course of empires.

Though never in the least pedantic, Mr. Ketton-Cremer, an Englishman from Norwich near the old Walpole seat at Houghton, presupposes a certain familiarity with the eighteenth century background, and refrains from re-quoting such generally known Walpole letters as that, for instance, on the funeral of George II. As for himself, Mr. Ketton-Cremer is completely at home in the age. A long bibliography provides further proof of his scholarly thoroughness, and he acknowledges much debt to Mr. Wilmarth Lewis of Farmington, Connecticut, whose unrivalled collection of Walpoliana was placed at his disposal. The Chatterton chapter illumines a clouded episode in the history of English literature, and the Squire of Strawberry Hill comes off with much less fault toward the marvellous boy than legend had allowed: Chatterton was neither impoverished nor distressed when he made his appeal to Walpole and the regrettable suicide did not take place till a year later. The de Deffand connection is also clearly treated; and further light is thrown on the famous quarrel with Gray—though the exact facts of the quarrel itself still prove elusive.

Catholics have an added reason for interest in Wal-



pole—one of his family had been a Jesuit martyr under Elizabeth. And as for the "Gothic castle" of Strawberry Hill, in recent years it has become a Catholic college and Mr. Ketton-Cremer expresses his gratification at the care the present owners take of the remaining Walpole decorations. If falling bombs have not found it, Mass is now offered in the little sham chapel that once so disconcerted the French ambassador, and real—not ghostly—clerical feet pace the pseudo-cloister. What would Horry have thought of that? PAULA KURTH

## ROMANCE THAT REMEMBERS TOO MANY ALAMOS

ON THE LONG TIDE. By Laura Krey. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$2.75

THIS is a rambling chronicle of life in Texas one hundred years ago. In it such noteworthy characters as Sam Houston, Stephen Austin and General Santa Anna move and have their being. Miss Krey, a native of the Brazos Valley in the Lone Star State, has recreated the early days of her country in a comprehensive, if slowly-paced, narrative of men who fought Indians and Mexicans to build one more stronghold for democracy.

Chief hero of the book is Jeffrey Fentress, cousin of Thomas Jefferson, who, when General Long organizes an expedition to free Texas from Spanish rule, leaves the civilization of New Orleans for the trackless prairies west of the Mississippi. Although the campaign is a failure, Jeffrey remains in the West and settles near Shell Bayou. Cholera plagues, slave trouble, Indian uprisings and bickering among the newly-arrived settlers do not daunt him, and eventually he becomes an influential landholder. Married to a Spanish Catholic, who gives him a daughter, he yet remains outside the Church, watching the influx of newcomers to Texas and rankling under the Spanish rule and the indecision of his neighbors. In the end, however, all are spurred on by the tragedy of Santa Anna's annihilation of the Alamo, and a stand is made for independence.

This is a story of still another group of pioneers who fought and died to make America a free country. It is a story full of drama, presenting well known figures less as heroes of history than as human beings. Joy and sorrow, the love of two young people of different cultures, the poverty of the Indians, the struggles of early Franciscan missionaries to Christianize the trackless interior of America—all these are in this book.

But although the author is a sincere student of history, *On the Long Tide* is not apt to appeal to the average reader. Its six hundred odd pages are composed of chapters that are but spasmodically linked together. The story of Jeffrey Fentress and his family is sometimes forgotten in the welter of historic facts that, for the uninitiated, are presented in a rather too haphazard manner. MARY FABYAN WINDEATT

## FIRST MODERN MONARCH, NOT TOO GOOD OR BAD

THE SECOND EMPIRE. By Octave Aubry. Translated by Arthur Livingston. J. B. Lippincott Co. \$5

THE author has the knack for writing a man's book. In his book on Napoleon, a man's hero, he, above all other biographers, popularized the history of Bonaparte. In the present book the subject is Louis Napoleon, Napoleon III, and in this case too the narrative appeals to men of virile instincts.

During the Second Empire, in M. Aubry's view, France put on an astonishingly spectacular show. The chief actor was of course the amazing Louis, son of Louis

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Bonaparte and Hortense, erstwhile monarchs in Holland. From the barrenness of exile and the vacuity of prison-life, this man's power mushroomed suddenly to imperial control over republican-minded France and to arbitrament of a Europe which had sworn at Waterloo never to tolerate a Bonaparte again.

Napoleon III is called by the author the first modern monarch, because he applied his power to progress. He rioted in public works, invented credit in its modern form, favored raises in wages, sought to increase wealth by increasing production, lowered taxes and kept his eyes on the interests of labor. Seen in this light, his career invites real comparison with modern reformers.

When M. Aubry brings his salutary critical attitude to bear upon the Second Empire he states—"Lightheartedly" would have been the proper motto for the Second Empire. . . . Those people lived lightheartedly, governed lightheartedly, lightheartedly involved their country in raids and adventures in which she lost substance and prestige . . . and marched to the ruin and abasement of France for many years to come." In general, M. Aubry follows P. de La Gorce, the foremost authority on Louis Napoleon, in deprecating the abandonment of Austria by France in the 1860's. Such a plan injured the Catholic peoples of all Europe and raised up a Prussianized Germany.

Yet Aubry, in his few pages of conclusion, calls Napoleon III a great European. He reasons that the Emperor aided nationalism and internationalism. He surmises that the future verdict of historians might rank the Second Emperor higher than Bismarck, the great German. Aubry is tolerant here. The rest of his book seems to contradict this conclusion. Certainly if France had had a Catholic Bismarck and Prussia been led by a Louis Napoleon as a Lutheran, France would have been a stronger and better nation since 1850.

The conclusion of Aubry's *Second Empire* is intelligible. For a man, an Emperor, who suffered the tragedy such as was experienced by Louis Napoleon at Sedan, certainly tolerant views are in order. The body of the book, moreover, is admirable. M. Aubry enlivens even familiar facts about the second imperial regime in France and adds so many anecdotes that the skimmer of his pages soon settles down to enjoy the full flavor.

PATRICK J. HIGGINS

THE GOOD SHEPHERD. By Gunnar Gunnarsson. The Bobbs-Merrill Co. \$1.50

CHRISTMAS gift-books are an honorably-established convention in publishing history, but they are only too often instances of pouring slightly musty wine into bright new bottles. Mr. Lloyd Douglas and Temple Bailey like to work the *Christmas Carol* vein year by year. But Gunnar Gunnarsson's *Good Shepherd* is an exception. One would be hard put to describe it properly; it is certainly not a nouvelle, nor a long short story, nor a short novel, either; but it is perfect, and its length organic, like a sonnet or a Japanese *haiku*. Mr. Gunnarsson has written a modern saga that in spirit and excellence is very close to the old Icelandic tale of Hrafnkel, the Priest of Frey. Only his is a tale of the mystery and sweetness of Advent Season and his hero the Christian shepherd, Benedikt, who each December goes out alone upon the icy upland fells to succor the lost sheep that have not come back to their folds at the time of the winter gathering-in. His animal comrades, Gnarly the bellwether, and Leo, the sheep-dog, so called for he was a very Pope of a dog, are in truth among the great animals of recent fiction; and their relations with shepherd Benedikt are handled with tenderness and exquisiteness that nonetheless preserves objectivity and does not slip down the perilous slope of empathy, whither went Felix Salten and Svend Fleuron. There is a hint, too, of the eery, half-sinister part dreams play in the life of the Iceland peasant, who still meets the Viking Skarp-hedinn on the storm-swept heath; but it is a glimpse, only, and the storm-gods cease their shrieking at last, and the Christmas bells ring out over the snow.

CHARLES A. BRADY



# ART

HOW far photography can be made a fine art will be discussed until the end of time. The late C. Grant LaFarge, architect, it may be noted, was one of the pioneers in treating photography seriously from the artistic standpoint. The camera's work, however, is most certainly a craft. Like all crafts, it finds ever new uses. One of the most recent to be developed is the work of writing history.

If you wish to see how this is done, visit the exhibit of Therese Bonney at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West Fifty-third Street, New York City. It is open until January 4. Miss Bonney first got the idea of composing a scenario, as it were, directly through photography when she did a series on the Vatican in 1939, afterwards published in book form. It is interesting to compare her present exhibit with Grady's famous photographs of the Civil War (alias War Between the States). Grady, too, produced an historical document by means of his camera—and how, with the cumbersome apparatus of his times! Miss Bonney's plan, however, is to pursue the sequence of events with the camera, to catch for the record those innumerable trifling yet fateful turns in the appearance of people and their doings which signify what has already happened and indicate what is going to happen next. The camera, in the fullest sense of the word, is made to tell a story.

Two sequences of photographs are shown, one of Finland, and the other of Belgium, before, during and after their respective 1940 invasions. The beginning of each series is devoted to the nation at peace. In Finland, for instance, we see the principal elements of a nation enjoying profound tranquillity at home and abroad. President Kallio is at his desk, professors are teaching their classes, athletes train for the Olympics, peasants plow their fields, children flock to school, peasant women put up jam for the winter. Then come the first rumors of war, succeeded by certainty, by a whole complicated series of preparations, the first grim realities as seen at home. From prayers for peace in the thronged Lutheran church, things progress to the grand piano in the hotel parlor used as a dressing table for the wounded. Flight and its accompanying misery, joined to grim determination, follow. Finally breaks the news of the surrender and a single totally exhausted soldier completes the story.

The Belgian sequence, though briefer, follows the same general plan. The effect is all the more startling since in neither series is a single one of the invaders—Russians or Germans—depicted; no battlefields or scenes of blood and horror at home. It is the moral, not the physical story that is told.

One element in the present technique is the use of the progressive display, now rapidly revolutionizing certain types of museum exhibits. The progressive plan was worked out, it will be remembered, by Father Maulny de Reviers, S.J., at the Pontifical Pavilion in Paris in 1937 and later in the League of Nations Exhibit, designed by him, at the New York World's Fair, 1939-40. Instead of sitting still while the successive parts of the display are unfolded before him, the spectator is himself in motion, walking from sentence to sentence, from room to room, the whole effect being greatly heightened by spacing, lighting and interesting variations of arrangements.

I hope that some energetic and inventive person will not rest until this same combination of photographic and museum technique is used for a splendid progressive exhibit of Catholic history, Catholic Action or Catholic doctrine in each of our principal cities in this country. The plan has possibilities; what is needed is the first satisfactory exemplification of those possibilities.

JOHN LAFARGE

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# THEATRE

**DELICATE STORY.** A pleasant interval in another session of disappointing plays comes to us in Ferenc Molnar's new comedy, which is offered on the stage of Henry Miller's Theatre by Gilbert Miller, Vinton Freedley, and the Theatre Guild. It is indeed a *Delicate Story*. At times it seems nebulous, especially during the first half of the performance. It is, however, so perfectly produced, directed and acted that it holds attention from the beginning; and as it mounts steadily in interest during its six scenes, it ends on a high note.

It is said that Mr. Molnar developed the play from a one-act version of it written some time ago. This seems possible. There are moments when the effort to expand the theme draws it out so thinly that the little story threatens to break. Even that delicate spinning has its charms, however, and the acting, with one exception, is distinguished.

Personally I did not find John Craven a satisfactory Oliver Odry, but the role might tax any young comedian. The rest of the cast, beginning with Edna Best, going on with Jay Fassett and Harry Gribbon, and bringing out in passing, stars of the past like Carlotta Nilsson and Katherine Grey in bit parts, is one of the best of the year. Edna Best is at the peak of her powers, and the luminous work of Fassett and Gribbon helps vastly in making up for the weaknesses of the comedy.

Its story can be told in two sentences. A delicatessen dealer's pretty young wife, (the roles played by Edna Best and Fassett) who helps to serve the customers in her husband's shop, imagines she is in love with one of these customers (Mr. Craven). All three of them are unhappy over this delusion, but the audience enjoys it. In the end the three correct it, in the play's best scene.

One must not tell too much about that. If ever a play needed its neat little surprise, *Delicate Story* does. The audience is both amused and satisfied, and all is well. It is nice to see Miss Nilsson and Miss Grey in spoken roles again, even so briefly. The scene between the husband and the police captain (Gribbon), is a delightful episode. Those who like good writing and fine acting will be quite happy these nights at the Henry Miller.

**ROMANTIC MR. DICKENS.** There were episodes in the life of Charles Dickens which would have made a good play. Some scenes in the H. H. and Marguerite Harper drama would have been appealing if properly acted. But it must be regretfully admitted that for once the acting in a New York production was disappointing. Robert Keith either did not like the role of Dickens, or could not get inside the skin of it. On the other hand, Thais Lawton gave us some charming moments as the Baroness Burdett-Coutts—a nice impersonation of a nice character.

There was a special reason, however, why everyone should have seen the performance. A new Barrymore star rose in it—John Barrymore's daughter Diana, and the best actress by far of this Barrymore generation. Indeed Miss Barrymore, young, lovely, extremely clever, and entirely at home on the stage—as why shouldn't she be?—walked off with the play in every scene she had. She had not many, and they were not very good material; but she made something definite of them.

**FLEDGLING.** This play, by Eleanor Chilton and Philip Lewis, produced at the Hudson by Otis Chatfield Taylor, was one of those depressing offerings that could not last. It was weakly written. It dallied with half a dozen problems and solved none of them. But it had one redeeming feature. It gave us another gifted newcomer, Sylvia Weld. Like Diana Barrymore, Miss Weld will be, I think, one of the future lights of our stage.

ELIZABETH JORDAN



# FILMS

**COMRADE X.** The special object of this robust satire on Moscow, that citadel of freedom, is the strangling news censorship which attempts to spoonfeed the outer world on internal errors as effectively as it does its own masses on international events. But King Vidor has produced the film as a combination satire and action thriller, so that, along with barbed dialog and ludicrous situations, there is a good share of forthright melodrama based on the traditional chase. A mysterious correspondent, sought by the OGPU for the annoying habit of telling the truth in his despatches, turns out to be an American newsman who not only escapes across the Roumanian border but takes a lady motorman and an army tank with him. Vidor sets a rapid pace, while the Soviet regimentation of thought, word and deed, viewed in a comic light as usual, supplies more vigorous if less strenuous amusement elsewhere. Hedy Lamarr, as a Marxist belle, makes considerably more of an impression as a broad comedienne than as a siren, and Clark Gable gives a characteristically virile reading of the newspaperman. Oscar Homolka, Felix Bressart, Sig Rumann and Eve Arden are excellent support. *Adults* will relish this merry essay on Marxist ideas of the freedom of the press. (MGM)

**INVITATION TO A MURDER.** An essential murder melodrama is sicklied over with the pale cast of thought in this film so that it loses the flush of excitement without adding much to its intellectual stature. A weak story meanders to an obvious conclusion in both a dramatic and ethical sense. The question of justifiable murder is raised when a philosopher, by courtesy, takes it upon himself to dispose of a woman who is threatening the happiness of a former pupil, now an artist. Only when the disastrous effect of his example is brought home to him does he recognize the electric chair awaiting him as a just punishment. Slow development gives the central character plenty of time to condone his act according to specious standards of "service" before giving way to common sense, so that the film is hardly to be congratulated on its moral conclusion. Thomas Mitchell brings undeserved conviction to the muddled thinker role, with Geraldine Fitzgerald, Jeffrey Lynn and James Stephenson doing as well as they can in an *adult product* which leaves an impression of wasted effort. (Warner)

**JENNIE.** This is a family portrait with rather strong coloring, depicting the trials to be faced under the rule of a tyrannical father. The parlor despotism is finally broken by a resourceful daughter-in-law who foments a family revolt and then hoaxes her grasping father-in-law into a semblance of mellowness. David Burton is more successful in creating an atmosphere of domestic realism than in generating interest in the plot, although the sincerity of Virginia Gilmore, Ludwig Stossel and William Henry carry that off fairly well. Set back around the turn of the century, the film is authentic enough to engage *adults* with sentimental leanings. (Twentieth Century-Fox)

**ESCAPE TO GLORY.** The war gives point to this compilation of heroics with incidental shafts aimed at the Nazis. A boatload of evacuees, making a varied study, is attacked by a submarine off Britain, and three of the passengers contrive to sink the raider with depth-bombs at the cost of their lives. John Brahm works the threads of numerous personal conflicts and character development into the larger pattern and achieves a fair consistency of *adult interest*, aided by Pat O'Brien and Constance Bennett. (Columbia)

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## EVENTS

ON the first Christmas there began to throb a tiny Sacred Heart. . . . That Heart is still beating on this 1940th Christmas. . . . It will be beating on the last Christmas Day. . . . Each throb of that Heart during these two thousand years has been for mankind. . . . It longs to fill every human heart with Divine Love, for Divine Love in human souls would mean peace on earth. . . . But many men, strangely, spurn the repeated offers. . . . The human heart is made for love. It is so constructed that it can never be genuinely happy and at peace unless it is filled with love for God and man. And it can never receive that love except by union with the Heart of the Infant of Bethlehem. There is no other way. . . . When men drift away from that Heart, an epidemic of hatred and injustice sweeps the earth. . . . In the last century there has been a vast apostasy from the Infant of Bethlehem, and paralleling that apostasy have sprung up more hatred, more wars, more bloodshed than appeared in any comparable period in history. . . . At the Versailles peace meeting, the Sacred Heart was excluded from the council table. . . . Men erected peace machinery designed to operate without that Heart. . . . The machinery sputtered for a while and then collapsed. . . . Today, the most frightful war the world has ever known is flaming through the nations and the continents and threatening to engulf the entire human race. . . .

In the midst of this world blackout, universal despair would be inevitable were it not for one fact. . . . The fact that there was and still is—Christmas. . . . If the Infant Jesus were not still on earth, easily accessible to all, men would have no one to turn to, no one capable of succoring them in this dark hour. . . . It would be futile for them to fly to the infant Buddha, for Buddha is dead, and even if he were living could not help them. . . . The infant Mahomet, the infant Confucius, have no power to lighten the terror in human hearts. . . . In the entire world, there is only one Infant Who can radiate strength in the hours of stress and trial: only one Infant with power to infuse courage into souls gripped by despair; only One Infant Who can lift up the human heart to taste Divine Love. . . . That Infant was born in Bethlehem many centuries ago. . . . In this year of 1940, He may be found in any Catholic tabernacle. . . . What a wretched sink of misery this world would be in 1940, if there had never been Christmas. . . . Like the light to the eye is hope to the human heart. . . . One of the greatest agonies of hell is the absence of all hope. . . . If Christmas had never occurred, there would be no hope today for anyone. No hope before death and no hope after death. . . . The Babe of Bethlehem brought hope for all men of good will, hope and love and the peace that passeth understanding. . . . And because He elected to remain on earth, mankind will never again be subject to the total despair which darkened the Roman world in which He was born. . . . Black as things may seem today, they are not as black as that. . . .

The Christ of the first Christmas has been moving down the centuries from Christmas to Christmas, offering peace to men. . . . Now at the 1940th Christmas, He is holding forth His Heart, saying: "Behold the Heart which has loved men so much and which has been repaid with coldness and insults." . . . He will march to the 2000th Christmas, to the 4000th, and at length to the last Christmas the world will see. And after that final December 25, mankind for the first time will begin to understand the overpowering love for men which throbbed in the tiny Sacred Heart in the cave of Bethlehem.

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